

PD HUMOR

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Mark Twain, Fanny Fern, Philip K. Dick (sources: Wikimedia Commons)

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THE BAG

from the Project Gutenberg Etext of *Reginald in Russia* etc by Saki

"The Major is coming in to tea," said Mrs. Hoopington to her niece. "He's just gone round to the stables with his horse. Be as bright and lively as you can; the poor man's got a fit of the glooms."

Major Pallaby was a victim of circumstances, over which he had no control, and of his temper, over which he had very little. He had taken on the Mastership of the Pexdale Hounds in succession to a highly popular man who had fallen foul of his committee, and the Major found himself confronted with the overt hostility of at least half the hunt, while his lack of tact and amiability had done much to alienate the remainder. Hence subscriptions were beginning to fall off, foxes grew provokingly scarcer, and wire obtruded itself with increasing frequency. The Major could plead reasonable excuse for his fit of the glooms.

In ranging herself as a partisan on the side of Major Pallaby Mrs. Hoopington had been largely influenced by the fact that she had made up her mind to marry him at an early date. Against his notorious bad temper she set his three thousand a year, and his prospective succession to a baronetcy gave a casting vote in his favour. The Major's plans on the subject of matrimony were not at present in such an advanced stage as Mrs. Hoopington's, but he was beginning to find his way over to Hoopington Hall with a frequency that was already being commented on.

"He had a wretchedly thin field out again yesterday," said Mrs. Hoopington. "Why you didn't bring one or two hunting men down with you, instead of that stupid Russian boy, I can't think."

"Vladimir isn't stupid," protested her niece; "he's one of the most amusing boys I ever met. Just compare him for a moment with some of your heavy hunting men--"

"Anyhow, my dear Norah, he can't ride."

"Russians never can; but he shoots."

"Yes; and what does he shoot? Yesterday he brought home a woodpecker in his game-bag."

"But he'd shot three pheasants and some rabbits as well."

"That's no excuse for including a woodpecker in his game-bag."

"Foreigners go in for mixed bags more than we do. A Grand Duke pots a vulture just as seriously as we should stalk a bustard. Anyhow,

I've explained to Vladimir that certain birds are beneath his dignity as a sportsman. And as he's only nineteen, of course, his dignity is a sure thing to appeal to."

Mrs. Hoopington sniffed. Most people with whom Vladimir came in contact found his high spirits infectious, but his present hostess was guaranteed immune against infection of that sort.

"I hear him coming in now," she observed. "I shall go and get ready for tea. We're going to have it here in the hall. Entertain the Major if he comes in before I'm down, and, above all, be bright."

Norah was dependent on her aunt's good graces for many little things that made life worth living, and she was conscious of a feeling of discomfiture because the Russian youth whom she had brought down as a welcome element of change in the country-house routine was not making a good impression. That young gentleman, however, was supremely unconscious of any shortcomings, and burst into the hall, tired, and less sprucely groomed than usual, but distinctly radiant. His game-bag looked comfortably full.

"Guess what I have shot," he demanded.

"Pheasants, woodpigeons, rabbits," hazarded Norah.

"No; a large beast; I don't know what you call it in English. Brown, with a darkish tail." Norah changed colour.

"Does it live in a tree and eat nuts?" she asked, hoping that the use of the adjective "large" might be an exaggeration.

Vladimir laughed.

"Oh no; not a biyelka."

"Does it swim and eat fish?" asked Norah, with a fervent prayer in her heart that it might turn out to be an otter.

"No," said Vladimir, busy with the straps of his game-bag; "it lives in the woods, and eats rabbits and chickens."

Norah sat down suddenly, and hid her face in her hands.

"Merciful Heaven!" she wailed; "he's shot a fox!"

Vladimir looked up at her in consternation. In a torrent of

agitated words she tried to explain the horror of the situation. The boy understood nothing, but was thoroughly alarmed.

"Hide it, hide it!" said Norah frantically, pointing to the still unopened bag. "My aunt and the Major will be here in a moment. Throw it on the top of that chest; they won't see it there."

Vladimir swung the bag with fair aim; but the strap caught in its flight on the outstanding point of an antler fixed in the wall, and the bag, with its terrible burden, remained suspended just above the alcove where tea would presently be laid. At that moment Mrs. Hoopington and the Major entered the hall.

"The Major is going to draw our covers to-morrow," announced the lady, with a certain heavy satisfaction. "Smithers is confident that we'll be able to show him some sport; he swears he's seen a fox in the nut copse three times this week."

"I'm sure I hope so; I hope so," said the Major moodily. "I must break this sequence of blank days. One hears so often that a fox has settled down as a tenant for life in certain covers, and then when you go to turn him out there isn't a trace of him. I'm certain a fox was shot or trapped in Lady Widden's woods the very day before we drew them."

"Major, if any one tried that game on in my woods they'd get short shrift," said Mrs. Hoopington.

Norah found her way mechanically to the tea-table and made her fingers frantically busy in rearranging the parsley round the sandwich dish. On one side of her loomed the morose countenance of the Major, on the other she was conscious of the scared, miserable eyes of Vladimir. And above it all hung THAT. She dared not raise her eyes above the level of the tea-table, and she almost expected to see a spot of accusing vulpine blood drip down and stain the whiteness of the cloth. Her aunt's manner signalled to her the repeated message to "be bright"; for the present she was fully occupied in keeping her teeth from chattering.

"What did you shoot to-day?" asked Mrs. Hoopington suddenly of the unusually silent Vladimir.

"Nothing--nothing worth speaking of," said the boy.

Norah's heart, which had stood still for a space, made up for lost time with a most disturbing bound.

"I wish you'd find something that was worth speaking about," said the hostess; "every one seems to have lost their tongues."

"When did Smithers last see that fox?" said the Major.

"Yesterday morning; a fine dog-fox, with a dark brush," confided Mrs. Hoopington.

"Aha, we'll have a good gallop after that brush to-morrow," said the Major, with a transient gleam of good humour. And then gloomy silence settled again round the teatable, a silence broken only by despondent munchings and the occasional feverish rattle of a teaspoon in its saucer. A diversion was at last afforded by Mrs. Hoopington's fox-terrier, which had jumped on to a vacant chair, the better to survey the delicacies of the table, and was now sniffing in an upward direction at something apparently more interesting than cold tea-cake.

"What is exciting him?" asked his mistress, as the dog suddenly broke into short angry barks, with a running accompaniment of tremulous whines.

"Why," she continued, "it's your gamebag, Vladimir! What HAVE you got in it?"

"By Gad," said the Major, who was now standing up; "there's a pretty warm scent!"

And then a simultaneous idea flashed on himself and Mrs. Hoopington. Their faces flushed to distinct but harmonious tones of purple, and with one accusing voice they screamed, "You've shot the fox!"

Norah tried hastily to palliate Vladimir's misdeed in their eyes, but it is doubtful whether they heard her. The Major's fury clothed and reclothed itself in words as frantically as a woman up in town for one day's shopping tries on a succession of garments. He reviled and railed at fate and the general scheme of things, he pitied himself with a strong, deep pity too poignant for tears, he condemned every one with whom he had ever come in contact to endless and abnormal punishments. In fact, he conveyed the impression that if a destroying angel had been lent to him for a week it would have had very little time for private study. In the lulls of his outcry could be heard the querulous monotone of Mrs. Hoopington and the sharp staccato barking of the fox-terrier. Vladimir, who did not understand a tithe of what was being said, sat fondling a cigarette

and repeating under his breath from time to time a vigorous English adjective which he had long ago taken affectionately into his vocabulary. His mind strayed back to the youth in the old Russian folk-tale who shot an enchanted bird with dramatic results.

Meanwhile, the Major, roaming round the hall like an imprisoned cyclone, had caught sight of and joyfully pounced on the telephone apparatus, and lost no time in ringing up the hunt secretary and announcing his resignation of the Mastership. A servant had by this time brought his horse round to the door, and in a few seconds Mrs. Hoopington's shrill monotone had the field to itself. But after the Major's display her best efforts at vocal violence missed their full effect; it was as though one had come straight out from a Wagner opera into a rather tame thunderstorm. Realising, perhaps, that her tirades were something of an anticlimax, Mrs. Hoopington broke suddenly into some rather necessary tears and marched out of the room, leaving behind her a silence almost as terrible as the turmoil which had preceded it.

"What shall I do with--THAT?" asked Vladimir at last.

"Bury it," said Norah.

"Just plain burial?" said Vladimir, rather relieved. He had almost expected that some of the local clergy would have insisted on being present, or that a salute might have to be fired over the grave.

And thus it came to pass that in the dusk of a November evening the Russian boy, murmuring a few of the prayers of his Church for luck, gave hasty but decent burial to a large polecat under the lilac trees at Hoopington.

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DO INSECTS THINK?

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Love Conquers All*, by Robert C. Benchley

In a recent book entitled, "The Psychic Life of Insects," Professor Bouvier says that we must be careful not to credit the little winged fellows with intelligence when they behave in what seems like an intelligent manner. They may be only reacting. I would like to confront the Professor with an instance of reasoning power on the part of an insect which can not be explained away in any such manner.

During the summer of 1899, while I was at work on my treatise "Do Larvae Laugh," we kept a female wasp at our cottage in the Adirondacks. It

really was more like a child of our own than a wasp, except that it _looked_ more like a wasp than a child of our own. That was one of the ways we told the difference.

It was still a young wasp when we got it (thirteen or fourteen years old) and for some time we could not get it to eat or drink, it was so shy. Since it was a female, we decided to call it Miriam, but soon the children's nickname for it--"Pudge"--became a fixture, and "Pudge" it was from that time on.

One evening I had been working late in my laboratory fooling round with some gin and other chemicals, and in leaving the room I tripped over a nine of diamonds which someone had left lying on the floor and knocked over my card catalogue containing the names and addresses of all the larvae worth knowing in North America. The cards went everywhere.

I was too tired to stop to pick them up that night, and went sobbing to bed, just as mad as I could be. As I went, however, I noticed the wasp flying about in circles over the scattered cards. "Maybe Pudge will pick them up," I said half-laughingly to myself, never thinking for one moment that such would be the case.

When I came down the next morning Pudge was still asleep over in her box, evidently tired out. And well she might have been. For there on the floor lay the cards scattered all about just as I had left them the night before. The faithful little insect had buzzed about all night trying to come to some decision about picking them up and arranging them in the catalogue-box, and then, figuring out for herself that, as she knew practically nothing about larvae of any sort except wasp-larvae, she would probably make more of a mess of rearranging them than as if she left them on the floor for me to fix. It was just too much for her to tackle, and, discouraged, she went over and lay down in her box, where she cried herself to sleep.

If this is not an answer to Professor Bouvier's statement that insects have no reasoning power, I do not know what is.

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AIN'T NATURE WONDERFUL!

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Gigolo*, by Edna Ferber

When a child grows to boyhood, and a boy to manhood under the soul-searing blight of a given name like Florian, one of two things must follow. He will degenerate into a weakling, crushed beneath the

inevitable diminutive--Flossie; or he will build up painfully, inch by inch, a barrier against the name's corroding action. He will boast of his biceps, flexing them the while. He will brag about cold baths. He will prate of chest measurements; regard golf with contempt; and speak of the West as God's country.

Florian Sykes was five feet three and a half, and he liked to quote those red-blooded virile poems about the big open spaces out where the West begins. The biggest open space in his experience was Madison Square, New York; and Eighth Avenue spelled the Far West for him. When Florian spoke or thought of great heights it was never in terms of nature, such as mountains, but in artificial ones, like skyscrapers. Yet his job depended on what he called the great outdoors.

The call of the wild, by the time it had filtered into his city abode, was only a feeble cheep. But he answered it daily from his rooms to the store in the morning, from the store to his rooms in the evening. It must have been fully ten blocks each way. There are twenty New York blocks to the mile. He threw out his legs a good deal when he walked and came down with his feet rather flat, and he stooped ever so little with the easy slouch that came in with the one-button sack suit. It's the walk you see used by English actors of the what-what school who come over here to play gentlemanly juveniles.

Down at Inverness & Heath's they called him Nature's Rival, but that was mostly jealousy, with a strong dash of resentment. Two of the men in his department had been Maine guides, and another boasted that he knew the Rockies as he knew the palm of his hand. But Florian, whose trail-finding had all been done in the subway shuttle, and who thought that butter sauce with parsley was a trout's natural element, had been promoted above their heads half a dozen times until now he lorded it over the fifth floor.

Not one of you, unless bedridden from birth, but has felt the influence of the firm of Inverness & Heath. You may never have seen the great establishment itself, rising story on story just off New York's main shopping thoroughfare. But you have felt the call of their catalogue. Surely at one time or another, they have supplied you with tents or talcum; with sleeping-bags or skis or skates; with rubber boots, or resin or reels. On their fourth floor you can be hatted for Palm Beach or booted for Skagway. On the third, outfitted for St. Moritz or San Antonio. But the fifth floor is the pride of the store. There is the camper's dream realized. There you will find man's most ingenious devices for softening Mother Nature's flinty bosom. Mosquito-proof tents; pails that will not leak; fleece-lined sleeping-bags; cooking outfits made up of pots and pans of every size, each shaped to disappear

mysteriously into the next, like a conjurer's outfit, the whole swallowed up by a magic leather case.

Here Florian reigned. If you were a regular Inverness & Heath customer you learned to ask for him as soon as the elevator tossed you up to his domain. He met you with what is known in the business efficiency guides as the strong personality greeting. It consisted in clasping your hand with a grip that drove your ring into the bone, looking you straight in the eye, registering alert magnetic force, and pronouncing your name very distinctly. Like this: hand-clasp firm--straight in the eye--"How do you do, Mr. Outertown. Haven't seen you since last June. How was the trip?" He didn't mean to be a liar. And yet he lied daily and magnificently for years, to the world and himself. When, for example, in the course of purchasing rods, flies, tents, canoes, saddles, boots, or sleeping-bags of him, you spoke of the delights of your contemplated vacation, he would say, "That's the life. I'm a Western man, myself.... God's country!" He said it with a deep breath, and an exhalation, as one who pants to be free of the city's noisome fumes. You felt he must have been born with an equipment of chaps, quirts, spurs, and sombrero. You see him flinging himself on a horse and clattering off with a flirt of hoofs as they do it in the movies. His very manner sketched in a background of plains, mountains, six-shooters, and cacti.

The truth of it was Florian Sykes had been born in Kenosha, Wisconsin. At the age of three he had been brought to New York by a pair of inexperienced and migratory parents. Their reasons for migrating need not concern us. They must, indeed, have been bad reasons. For Florian, at thirteen, a spindle-legged errand-boy in over-size knickers, a cold sore on his lip, and shoes chronically in need of resoling, had started to work for the great sporting goods store of Inverness & Heath.

Now, at twenty-nine, he was head of the fifth floor. The cold sore had vanished permanently under a régime of health-food, dumb-bells, and icy plunges. The shoes were bench-made and flawless. If the legs still were somewhat spindling their correctly creased casings hid the fact.

There's little doubt that if Florian had been named Bill, and if the calves of his legs had bulged, and if, in his youth, he had gone to work for a wholesale grocer, he would never have forged for himself a coat of mail whose links were pretense and whose bolts were sham. He probably would have been frankly content with the sight of an occasional ball-game out at the Polo Grounds, and the newspaper bulletins of a prizefight by rounds. But here he was at the base that supplied America's outdoor equipment. He who outfitted mountaineers must speak knowingly of glaciers, chasms, crevices, and peaks. He who advised canoeists must assume wisdom of paddles, rapids, currents, and portages.

He whose sleeping hours were spangled with the clang of the street cars must counsel such hardy ones as were preparing cheerfully to seek rest rolled in blankets before a camp-fire's dying embers. And so, slowly, year by year, in his rise from errand to stock boy, from stock boy to clerk, from clerk to assistant manager, thence to his present official position, he had built about himself a tissue of innocent lies. He actually believed them himself.

Sometimes a customer who in June had come in to purchase his vacation supplies with the city pallor upon him, returned in September, brown, hard, energized, to thank Florian for the comfort of the outfit supplied him.

"I just want to tell you, Sykes, that that was a great little outfit you sold me. Yessir! Not a thing too much, and not a thing too little, either. Remember how I kicked about that air mattress? Well, say, it saved my life! I slept like a baby every night. And the trip! You've been there, haven't you?"

Florian would smile and nod his head. His grateful customer would clap him on the shoulder. "Some pebble, that mountain!"

"Get to the top?" Florian would ask.

"Well, we didn't do the peak. That is, not right to the top. Started to a couple of times, but the girls got tired, and we didn't want to leave 'em alone. Pretty stiff climb, let me tell you, young feller."

"You should have made the top."

"Been up, have you?"

"A dozen times."

"Oh, well, that's your business, you might say. Next time, maybe, we'll do it. The missus says she wants to go back there every year."

Florian would shake his head. "Oh, you don't want to do that. Have you been out to Glacier? Have you done the Yellowstone on horseback? Ever been down the Grand Canyon?"

"Why--no--but----"

"You've got a few thrills coming to you then."

The sunburned traveller would flush mahogany. "That's all right for you

to say. But I'm no chamois. But it was a great trip, just the same. I want to thank you."

Then, for example, Florian's clothes. He had adopted that careful looseness--that ease of fit--that skilful sloppiness--which is the last word in masculine sartorial smartness. In talking he dropped his final g's and said "sportin'" and "mountain climbin'" and "shootin'." From June until September he wore those Norfolk things with bow ties, and his shirt patterns were restrained to the point of austerity. A signet ring with a large scrolled monogram on the third finger of his right hand was his only ornament, and he had worn a wrist watch long before the War. He had never seen a mountain. The ocean meant Coney Island. He breakfasted at Child's. He spent two hours over the Sunday papers. He was a Tittlebat Titmouse without the whiskers. And Myra loved him.

If Florian had not pretended to be something he wasn't; and if he had not professed an enthusiastic knowledge of things of which he was ignorant, he would, in the natural course of events, have loved Myra quickly in return. In fact, he would have admitted that he had loved her first, and desperately. And there would have been no story entitled, "Ain't Nature Wonderful!"

Myra worked in the women's and misses', third floor, and she didn't care a thing about the big outdoors or the great open spaces. She didn't even pretend to--at first. A clear-eyed, white-throated, capable young woman, almost poignantly pretty. You sensed it was the kind of loveliness that fades a bit with marriage. In its place come two sturdy babies to carry on the torch of beauty. You sensed, too, that Myra would keep their noses wiped, their knees scrubbed, and their buttons buttoned and that, between a fresh blouse for herself and fresh rompers for them, the blouse would always lose.

She hated discomfort, did Myra, as does one who has always had too much of it. After you have stood all day, from 8:30 A. M. to 5:30 P. M., selling sweaters, riding togs, golf clothes, and trotteurs to athletic Dianas whose lines are more lathe than lithe, you can't work up much enthusiasm about exercising for the pure joy of it. Myra had never used a tennis-racket in her life, but daily she outfitted for the sport bronzed young ladies who packed a nasty back-hand wallop in their right. She wore (and was justly proud of) a 4-A shoe, and took a good deal of comfort in the fact as she sold 7-Cs at \$22.50 a pair to behemothian damsels who possessed money in proportion to Myra's beauty. Myra was the only girl in her section who never tried to dress in imitation of the moneyed ones whom she served. The other girls were wont to wear severely tailored shirts, mannish ties, stocks, flat-heeled shoes, rough tweed skirts. Not so Myra. That delicate cup-like hollow at

the base of her white throat was fittingly framed in a ruffle of frilly georgette. She did her hair in soft undulations that flowed away from forehead and temple, and she powdered her nose a hundred times a day. Her little shoes were high-heeled and her hands were miraculously white, and if you prefer Rosalind to Viola you'd better quit her now.

"Anybody who wants to wear those cross-country clothes is welcome to them," she said. "I'm a girl and I'm satisfied to be. I don't see why I should wear a hard-boiled shirt and a necktie any more than a man should wear a pink georgette trimmed with filet. By the end of the week, when I've spent six solid days selling men's clothes to women, I feel's if I'd die happy if I could take a milk bath and put on white satin and pearls and a train six yards long from the shoulders--_you_ know."

Not the least of Myra's charm was a certain unexpected and pleasing humour. It was as though, on opening a chocolate box, you were to find it contained caviar.

Of course by now you know that Myra is the girl you used to see smiling out at you from the Inverness & Heath catalogue entitled Sportswomen's Apparel. The head of her department had soon discovered that Myra, posing for illustrations to be used in the spring booklet, raised that pamphlet's selling power about 100 per cent. Sunburned misses, with wind-ravaged complexions, gazing at the picture of Myra, cool, slim, luscious-looking, saw themselves as they would fain be--and bought the Knollwood sweater depicted--in silk or wool--putty, maize, navy, rose, copen, or white--\$35. Myra posed in paddock coat and breeches--she who had never been nearer a horse than the distance between sidewalk and road. She smiled at you over her shoulder radiant in a white tricot Palm Beach suit, who thought palms grew in jardinières only. On page 17 she was revealed in the boyish impudence of our Aiken Polo Habit, complete, \$90. She was ravishing in her golf clothes, her small feet in sturdy, flat-heeled boots planted far apart, and only the most carping would have commented on the utter impossibility of her stance. Then there was the Killiecrankie Travel Tog (background of assorted mountains) made of Scotch tweed (she would never come nearer Scotland than oatmeal for breakfast) only \$140. To say nothing of motor clothes, woodland suits, trap-shooting costumes, Yellowstone Park outfits, hunting habits. She wore brogues, and boots, and skating shoes, and puttees and tennis ties; sou'westers, leather topcoats, Jersey silks, military capes. You saw her fishing, hunting, boating, riding, golfing, snow-shoeing, swimming. She was equally lovely in khaki with woollen stockings, or in a habit of white linen and the shiniest of riding-boots. And as she peeled off the one to put on the next she remarked wearily, "A kimono and felt slippers and my hair down my back will look pretty good to me to-night, after this."

You see, Myra and Florian really had so much in common that if he had been honest with himself the course of their love would have run too smooth to be true. But Florian, in his effort to register as a two-fisted, hard-riding, nature-taming male, made such a success of it that for a long time he deceived even Myra who loved him. And during that time she, too, lied in her frantic effort to match her step with his. When he talked of riding and swimming; of long, hard mountain hikes; of impenetrable woods, she looked at him with sparkling eyes. (She didn't need to throw much effort into that, nature having supplied her with the ground materials.) When, on their rare Sundays together, he suggested a long tramp up the Palisades she agreed enthusiastically, though she hated it. Not only that, she went, loathing it. The stones hurt her feet. Her slender ankles ached. The sun burned her delicate skin. The wind pierced her thin coat. Florian strode along with the exaggerated step of the short man who bitterly resents his lack of stature. Every now and then he stood still, and breathed deeply, and said, "Glorious!" And Myra looked at his straight back, and his clear-cut profile, and his well-dressed legs and said, "Isn't it!" and wished he would kiss her. But he never did.

In between times he bemoaned his miserable two weeks' vacation which made impossible the sort of thing he said he craved--a long, hard, rough trip into a mountain interior. The Rockies, preferably, in their jaggedest portions.

"That's the kind of thing that makes a fellow over. Roughing it. You forget about the city. In the saddle all day--nothing but sky and mountains. God's big open spaces! That's the life!"

Myra trudged along, painfully. "But isn't it awfully uncomfortable? You know. Cold? And tents? I don't think I'd like----"

"I wouldn't give a cent for a person who was so soft they couldn't stand roughing it a little. That's the trouble with you Easterners. Soft! No red blood. Too many street cars, and high buildings, and restaurants. Chop down a few trees and fry your own bacon, and make your own camp, and saddle your own horses--that's what I call living. I'm going back to it some day, see if I don't."

Myra looked down at her own delicate wrists, with the blue veins so exquisitely etched against the white flesh. A little look of terror and hopelessness came into her eyes.

"I--I couldn't chop down a tree," she said. She was panting a little in keeping up with him, for he was walking very fast. "I'd be afraid to

saddle a horse. You have to stand right next to them, don't you? Most girls can't chop----"

Florian smiled a little superior smile. "Miss Jessie Heath can." Myra looked up at him, quickly. "She's a wonder! She was in yesterday," he went on. "Spent all of two hours up in my department, looking things over. There's nothing she can't do. She won a blue ribbon at the Horse Show in February. Saddle. She's climbed every peak that amounts to anything in Europe. Did the Alps when she was a little girl. This summer she's going to do the Rockies, because things are so mussed up in Europe, she says. I'm selecting the outfit for the party. Gad, what a trip!" He sighed, deeply.

Myra was silent. She was not ungenerous toward women, as are so many pretty girls. But she was human, after all, and she did love this Florian, and Jessie Heath was old man Heath's daughter. Whenever she came into the store she created a little furore among the clerks. Myra could not resist a tiny flash of claws.

"She's flat, like a man. And she wears 7-1/2-C. And her face looks as if it had been rubbed with a scouring brick."

"She's a goddess!" said Florian, striding along. Myra laughed, a little high hysterical laugh. Then she bit her lip, and then she was silent for a long time. He was silent, too, until suddenly he heard a little sound that made him turn quickly to look at her stumbling along at his side. And she was crying.

"Why--what's the matter! What's!-----"

"I'm tired," sobbed Myra, and sank in a little limp heap on a convenient rock. "I'm tired. I want to go home."

"Why"--he was plainly bewildered--"why didn't you tell me you were tired!"

"I'm telling you now."

They took the nearest ferry across the river, and the Subway home. At the entrance to the noisy, crowded flat in which she lived Myra turned to face him. She was through with pretense. She was tired of make-believe. She felt a certain relief in the thought of what she had to say. She faced him squarely.

"I've lived in the city all my life and I'm crazy about it. I love it. I like to walk in the park a little maybe, Sundays, but I hate tramping

like we did this afternoon, and you might as well know it. I wouldn't chop down a tree, not if I was freezing to death, and I'd hate to have to sleep in a tent, so there! I hate sunburn, and freckles, and ants in the pie, and blisters on my feet, and getting wet, and flat-heeled shoes, and I never saddled a horse. I'd be afraid to. And what's more, I don't believe you do, either."

"Don't believe I do what?" asked Florian in a stunned kind of voice.

But Myra had turned and left him. And as he stood there, aghast, bewildered, resentful, clear and fair in the back of his mind, against all the turmoil of thoughts that seethed there, was the picture of her white, slim, exquisite throat with a little delicate pulse beating in it as she cried out her rebellion. He wished--or some one inside him that he could not control wished--that he could put his fingers there on her throat, gently.

It was very warm that evening, for May. And as he sat by the window in his pajamas, just before going to bed, he thought about Myra, and he thought about himself. But when he thought about himself he slammed the door on what he saw. Florian's rooms were in Lexington Avenue in the old brownstone district that used to be the home of white-headed millionaires with gold-headed canes, who, on dying, left their millions to an Alger newsboy who had once helped them across the street. Millionaires, gold-headed canes, and newsboys had long vanished, and the old brownstone fronts were rooming houses now, interspersed with delicatessens, interior decorators, and dressmaking establishments. Florian was fond of boasting when he came down to the store in the morning, after a hot, muggy July night, "My place is like a summer resort. Breeze just sweeps through it. I have to have the covers on."

Sometimes Mrs. Pet, his landlady, made him a pitcher of lemonade and brought it up to him, and he sipped it, looking out over the city, soothed by its roar, fascinated by its glow and brilliance. Mrs. Pet said it was a pleasure to have him around, he was so neat.

Florian was neat. Not only neat, but methodical. He had the same breakfast every week-day morning at Child's; half a grapefruit, one three-minute egg, coffee, rolls. On Sunday morning he had bacon and eggs. It was almost automatic. Speaking of automatics, he never took his meals at one of those modern mechanical feeders. Though at Child's he never really beheld the waitress with his seeing eye, he liked to have her slap his dishes down before him with a genial crash. A gentleman has his little foibles, and being waited on at meal-time was one of his. Occasionally, to prove to himself that he wasn't one of those fogies who get in a rut, he ordered wheat cakes with maple syrup for breakfast.

They always disagreed with him.

She was a wise young woman, Myra.

Perhaps Florian, as he sat by his window that Sunday night of Myra's outburst, thought on these things. But he would not admit to himself whither his thinking led. And presently he turned back the spread, neatly, and turned out the light, and opened the window a little wider, and felt of his chin, as men do, though the next shave is eight hours distant, and slept, and did not dream of white throats as he had secretly hoped he would.

And next morning, at eleven, a very wonderful thing began to happen. Next morning, at eleven, Miss Jessie Heath loped (well, it can't be helped. That describes it exactly) into the broad aisles of the fifth floor. She had been coming in a great deal, lately. The Western trip, no doubt.

Descriptions of people are clumsy things, at best, and stop one's story. But Jessie Heath must have her paragraph. A half-dozen lines ought to do it. Well--she was the kind of girl who always goes around with a couple of Airedales, and in woollen stockings, low shoes and mannish shirts, and shell-rimmed glasses, and you felt she wore Ferris waists. Her hair was that ashen blonde with no glint of gold in it. You knew it would become grey in middle age with no definite period of transition. She never buttoned her heavy welted gloves but wore them back over her hand, like a cuff, very English. You felt there must be a riding crop concealed about her somewhere. Perhaps up her spine.

As has been said, there was always a little flurry when she came into the big store that had made millions for her father. It would be nonsense to suppose that Jessie Heath ever deliberately set out to attract a man who was an employee in that store. But it is pleasant and soothing to be admired, and to have a fine pair of eyes look fine things into one's own (shell-rimmed) ones. And, after all, the Jessie Heaths of this world are walked with, and golfed with, and ridden with, and tennised with, and told that they're wonderful pals. But it's the Myras that are made love to. So now, when Florian Sykes looked at her, and flushed a little, and said, "I suppose there are a lot of lucky ones going along with you on this trip, Miss--Jessie," she flushed, too, and flicked her boot with her riding crop--No, no! I forgot. She didn't have a riding crop. Well, anyway she gave the effect of flicking her boot with her riding crop, and said:

"Would you like to go?"

"Would I like to go----!" He choked over it. Then he sighed, and smiled rather wistfully. "That's needlessly cruel of you, Miss Jessie."

"Maybe it's not so cruel as you think," Jessie Heath answered. "Did you make out that list?"

"I spent practically all of yesterday on it." Which we know was a lie because, look, wasn't he with Myra?

They went over the list together. Fishing tackle, tents, pocket-flashes, puttees, ponchos, chocolate, quirts, slickers, matches, medicine-case, sweaters, cooking utensils, blankets. It grew longer, and longer. Their heads came close together over it. And they trailed from department to department, laughing and talking together. And the two Maine ex-guides and the clerk who boasted he knew the Rockies like the palm of his hand, said to one another, "Get on to Nature's Rival trying to make a hit with Jessie."

Meanwhile Jessie was saying, "Of course you know the Rockies, being a Western man, and all."

Florian smiled rather deprecatingly. "Queer part of it is I don't know the Rockies so well--" with an emphasis on the word Rockies that led one to think his more noteworthy feats of altitude had been accomplished about the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Andes, and the lesser Appalachians.

"But you've climbed them, haven't you?"

He burned his bridges behind him. "Only the--ah--eastern slopes."

"Oh, that's all right, then. We're going to do the west. It'll be wonderful having you----"

"Me!"

"Nothing. Let's go on with the list. M-m-m--where were we? Oh, yes. Now trout flies. Which do you honestly think best for mountain trout? The Silver Doctor or the Gray Hackle or the Yellow Professor? U'm?"

Inspiration comes to us at such times. It could have been nothing less that prompted him to say, "Well--doesn't that depend a lot on the weather and the depth of the--ahem!--water?"

"Yes, of course. How silly of me. We'll take a lot of all kinds, and then we'll be safe."

He breathed again and smiled. He had a winning smile, Florian. Jessie Heath smiled in return and they stood there, the two of them, lips parted, eyes holding eyes.

"My God!" said the man who boasted he knew the Rockies like the palm of his own hand, "it looks as if he'd landed her, the stiff."

Certainly it looked as if he had. For next morning old Heath, red-faced, genial-looking (and not so genial as he looked) approached the head of the fifth floor and said, "How long you been with us, Sykes?"

"Well, I came here as errand boy at thirteen. That's ten--twelve--fifteen--just about sixteen years next June. Yes, sir."

"How'd Jessie--how'd my daughter get the idea you were from the West, and a regular mountain goat, and a peak-climber and all that?"

He did look a little uncomfortable then, but it was too late for withdrawal. "I am from the West, you know."

"Have you had any long vacations since you've been with us?"

"No, sir. You see, in the summer, of course--our busy season. I never can get away then. So I've taken my two weeks in the fall."

Old Heath's eyes narrowed musingly. "Well, you couldn't have done all this mountain climbing before you were thirteen. And Jessie says----" He paused, rather blankly. "You say you do know the Rockies, though, eh?"

Florian drew himself up a little. "As well as I know any mountain."

"Oh, well, then, that's all right. Seems Jessie thinks you'd be a fine fellow to have along on this trip. I can't go myself. I hate this mountain climbing, anyway. Too darned hard work. But it's all right for young folks. Well, now, what do you say? Want to go? You've earned a vacation, after sixteen years. There's about eight in Jessie's crowd. Not counting guides. What do you say? Like to go?"

For a dazed moment Florian stared at him. "Why, yessir. Yes, sir, I'd--I'd like to go--very much." And he coughed to hide his joy and terror.

And two weeks later he went.

The thing swept the store like a flame. In an hour everyone knew it from the shipping-room to the roof-restaurant. Myra saw him the day he left.

She was game, that girl.

"I hope you're going to have a beautiful time, Mr. Sykes."

"Thanks, Myra." He could afford to be lenient with her, poor little girl.

She ventured a final wretched word or two. "It's--it's wonderful of Mr. Heath and--Miss Heath--isn't it?" She was rubbing salt into her own wound and taking a fierce sort of joy in it.

"Wonderful! Say, they're a couple of God's green footstools, that's what they are!" He was a little mixed, but very much in earnest. "A couple of God's green footstools." And he went.

He went, and Myra watched him go, and except for a little swelling gulp in her white throat you'd never have known she'd been hit. He was going with Jessie Heath. Now, Myra had no illusions about those things. Old man Heath's wife, now dead, had been a girl with no money and no looks, and yet he had married her. If Jessie Heath happened to take a fancy to Florian, why----

Myra's little world stood still, and in it were small voices, far away, asking for 6-1/2-B; and have you it in brown, and other unimportant things like that.

Ten minutes after the train had started Florian Sykes knew he shouldn't have come. He had suspected it before. He kept saying to himself, over and over: "You've always wanted a mountain trip, and now you're going to have it. You're a lucky guy, that's what you are. A lucky guy." But in his heart he knew he was lying.

In the first place, they were all so glib with their altitudes, and their packs, and their trails, and their horses and their camps. It was a rather mixed and raggle-taggle group that Miss Jessie Heath had gathered about her for this expedition to the West. They ranged all the way from a little fluffy witless golden-haired girl they all called Mud, for some obscure reason, and who had been Miss Heath's room-mate at college, surprisingly enough, to a lady of stern and rock-bound countenance who looked like a stage chaperon made up for the part. She was Miss Heath's companion in lieu of Mrs. Heath, deceased. In between there were a couple of men of Florian's age; two youngsters of twenty-one or two who talked of Harvard and asked Florian what his university had been; an old girl whose name Florian never did learn; and two others of Jessie Heath's age and general style. Florian found himself as bewildered by their talk and views as though they had been

jabbering a foreign language. Every now and then, though, one of them would turn to him for a bit of technical advice. If it happened to concern equipment Florian could answer it readily enough. Ten years on the fifth floor had taught him many things. But if the knowledge sought happened to be of things geographical or of nature, he floundered, struggled, sank. And it took them just about half a day to learn this. The trip out takes four, from New York.

At first they asked him things to see him suffer. But they tired of that, after a bit. It was too easy. Queerly enough, Jessie Heath, mountain-wise though she was, believed in him almost to the end. But that only made the next three weeks the bitterer for Florian Sykes. For when it came to leaping from peak to peak Jessie turned out to be the young gazelle. And she liked to have Florian with her. On the trail she was a mosquito afoot, a jockey ahorseback. A thousand times, in those three weeks of torture, he would fix his eye on a tree ten feet away, up the steep trail. And to himself he would say, "I'll struggle, somehow, as far as that tree, and then die under it." And he would stagger another ten feet, his heart pounding in the unaccustomed altitude, his lungs bursting, his lips parted, his breath coming sobbingly, his eyes starting from his head. Leaping lightly ahead of him, around the bend, was Jessie, always. She had a way of calling to the laggard--halloing, I believe it's supposed to be. And she expected an answer. An answer! When your lungs were bursting through your chest and your heart was crowding your tonsils. When he reached her it was always to find her perched on a seemingly inaccessible rock, demanding that he join her to admire the view. Before three days had gone by the sound of that halloo with its breeziness and breath-control and power, made him sick all over. Sometimes she sang, going up the trail. He could not have croaked a note if failure to do it had meant instant death. The Harvard hellions (it is his own term) were indefatigable, simian, pitiless. At nine thousand feet they aimed at ten. At ten they would have nothing less than twelve. At twelve thousand they were all for making another drive for it and having lunch at an altitude of thirteen thousand five hundred. As he toiled painfully along hundreds of feet behind them, Florian used to take a hideous pleasure in fancying how, on reaching the ever-distant top, the Harvard hellions would be missing. And after searching and halloing he would peer over the edge (13,500 feet, at the very least, surely) and there, at the bottom, would discern their mangled forms, distorted, crushed, and quite, quite dead.

"Yoo-o-o--hoo-oo-oo-oo!" Jessie, up the trail. His rosy dream would vanish.

He learned why seasoned mountain climbers make nothing of the ascent. He learned, in bitterness and unshed tears, that it is the descent that

breaks the heart and shatters the already broken frame. That down-climb with your toes crashing through your boots at every step; with your knee-brakes refusing to work, your thighs creaking, your joints spavined. The views were wonderful. But, oh, the price he paid! The air was intoxicating. But what, he asked himself, was wine to a dead man! Miserable little cockney that he was he told himself a hundred times a day that if he ever survived this he'd never look at another view again, unless from the Woolworth Tower, on a calm day. He thought of New York as a traveller, dying of thirst in the desert, thinks of the lush green oasis. New York in July! Dear New York in July, its furs in storage, its collar unstarched, its coat unbuttoned; even its doormen and chauffeurs almost human. Would he ever see it again? And then, as if in answer to his question, there befell an incident so harrowing, so nerve-shattering, as almost to make a negative answer seem inevitable.

Florian got lost.

It was the third week of the trip. Florian had answered Jessie's eleven thousandth question about things of which he was quite, quite ignorant. His brain felt queer and tight, as though something were about to snap.

They were to climb the Peak next day. All that day they had been approaching it. Florian looked at it. And he hated it. It was like a colossal forbidding finger pointing upward, upward, taunting him, menacing him. He wished that some huge cataclysm of nature would occur, swallowing up this hideous mass of pitiless rock.

Jessie Heath's none too classic nose had peeled long ere this and her neck was like a choice cut of underdone beefsteak. Florian told himself that there was something almost indecent about a girl who cared so little about her skin, and hair, and eyes, and hands. He actually hated her sturdy legs in their boots or puttees--those tireless, pitiless legs, always twinkling ahead of him, up the trail.

On the fateful day he was tired. He had often been tired to the point of desperation during the past three weeks. But this was different. Every step was torture. Every breath was pain. Jessie was a few hundred feet up the trail, as always, and hallooing to him every dozen paces. The Harvard hellions were doing the chamois ahead of her. The rest of the party were toiling along behind. One guide was just ahead. Another, leading two horses, bringing up the rear. Suddenly, desperately, Florian knew he must rest. He would fling himself on a bed of moss by the side of the trail, in the shade, near a stunted, wind-tortured timber-line pine, and let the whole procession pass him, and then catch up with them before they disappeared.

He stepped to the side of the narrow trail, almost indiscernible at this height, flung himself down with a little groan of relief, and shut his sun-seared eyes. The voices of the others came to him. There was little conversation. He heard Jessie's accursed halloo. Then the soft thud of the pack-horses' hoofs, the creak of the saddles. He must get up and follow now. In a minute. In a minute. In a m----

He must have slept there for two hours. When he awoke the light had changed and the air was chill. He sat up, bewildered. He rose. He looked about, called, halloosed, shouted, did all the futile frenzied things that a city man does who is lost in the mountains, and, knowing he is lost, is panic-stricken. The trail, of course! He looked for it, and there was no trail, to his town-wise eyes. He ran hither and thither, and back to hither again. He went forward, seemingly, and found himself back whence he started. He looked for cairns, for tree-blazes, for any one of the signs of which he had learned in the last three weeks. He found none. He called again, shrilly. A terror seized him. Terror of those grim, menacing, towering mountain masses. He ran round and round and round; darted backward and forward; called; stumbled; fell, and subsided, beaten.

He had a tiny box of matches with him, but little else. He had found the trail difficult enough without being pack-burdened. Food? He bethought himself of a little blue tin box in his coat pocket. He took it out and looked at it. Its very name struck terror to his heart.

U. S. Emergency Ration. It was printed on the box. Just below that he made out:

Powdered sugar

Chocolate

Cocoa butter

Malted milk

Egg Albumin

Casein.

Not to be opened except on command of officer.

My God! He had come to this! He looked at it, wide-eyed. He was very hungry. The ration, in its blue tin, like a box of shaving talcum, had been handed to each of the party in a chorus of shouting and laughter. And now it was to save his life. He managed to pry open the box, and ate some of its contents, slowly. It was not agreeable.

Dusk was coming on. There were mountain lions, he knew that. Those rocks and crevices were peopled with all sorts of stealthy, snarling, slinking, four-footed creatures. He would build a fire. They were

afraid of the flames, he had read somewhere, and would not come near. Perhaps the others would see the light, and come back to find him. Curse them! Why hadn't they come before now!

It was dusk by the time he had his fire built. He had crouched over it for a half-hour, blowing it, coaxing it, wheedling it. There were few twigs or sticks at this height. He was very cold. His heavy sweater was in the pack on the horse's back. Finally he was rewarded with a feeble flicker, a tiny tongue of flame. He rose from his knees and passed his hand over his forehead with a gesture of utter weariness and despair. And then he stared, transfixed. For on the plateau above him rose a great shaft of fire. The kind of fire that only Pete, the most expert among guides, could build. And as he stared there burst out at him from behind trees, rocks, crevices, a whole horde of imps shrieking with fiendish laughter.

"Ho, ho," laughed Jessie.

And "Ha, ha!" howled the Harvard hellions.

"Thought you were lost, didn'tcha?"

"Gosh, you looked funny!"

"Your face!----"

Florian stared at them. He did not smile. He went quietly over to his tiny camp-fire and stamped it out, neatly, as he had been taught to do. He took his can of emergency ration (not to be opened except on command of officer) and hurled it far, far down the mountainside. Jessie Heath laughed, contemptuously. And Florian, looking at her, didn't care. Didn't care. Didn't care.

The nightmare was over in August. Over, that is, for Florian. The rest were to do another four weeks of it, farther into the interior. Florian sickened at the thought of it. When he bade them farewell he was so glad to be free of them that he almost loved them. When he found himself actually on the little jerkwater train that was to connect him with the main line he patted the dusty red plush seat, gratefully, as one would stroke a faithful beast. When he came into the Grand Central station he would have stooped and kissed the steps of the marble staircase if his porter had not been on the point of vanishing with his bags. That night on reaching home he stayed in the bathtub for an hour, just lying there in the warm, soothing liquid, only moving to dapple his fingers now and then as a lazy fish moves a languid fin. God's country! This was it.

"My, it's nice to have you back again, Mr. Sykes," said Mrs. Pet.

"Is your big two-room suite on the next floor vacant?" said Florian, cryptically.

Mrs. Pet stared a little, wonderingly. "Yes, that's vacant since the Ostranders left, in July. Why do you ask, Mr. Sykes?"

"Nothing," Florian answered, airily. "Not a thing. Just asked."

His train had come in at nine. It was eleven now, but he was restless, and a little hungry, and very much exhilarated. "You certainly look grand," Mrs. Pet had exclaimed, admiringly. "And my, how you're sunburned!"

He left the Lexington Avenue house, now, and strolled over to the near-by white-tiled restaurant. There, in the window, was the white-capped one, flapping pancakes. Florian could have kissed him. He sat down. A waitress approached him.

"I don't know," mused Florian. "I'm sort of hungry, but I don't just----"

"The pork and beans are elegant to-night," suggested the girl.

And "Pork and beans! NO!" thundered Florian.

The girl drew herself up icily. "I ain't deaf. You don't need to yell."

Florian looked up at her contritely, and smiled his winning smile. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean--I--I never want to see beans again as long as I live!"

He was down at the store early, early next morning. His practised eye swept the department for possible slackness, for changes, for needed adjustments. The two Maine ex-guides and the chap who knew the Rockies like the palm of his hand welcomed him with Judas-like slaps on the shoulder. "Like it?" they asked him. And, "God's country--the West," he answered, mechanically. After that he ignored them. At nine he ran down the two flights of stairs to the third floor. He did not wait for the elevator.

For a moment he could not find her and his heart sank. She might be away on a vacation. Then he spied her in a corner half-hidden by a rack of covert coats. She was hanging them up. The floor was empty of customers thus early. He strode over to her. She turned. Into her eyes there

leaped a look which she quickly veiled as had been taught her by a thousand thousand female ancestors.

"I got your postals," she said.

Florian said nothing.

"My, you're brown!"

Florian said nothing.

"Did you--have a good time?"

Florian said nothing.

"What--what----" Her hand went to her throat, where his eyes were fastened.

Then Florian spoke. "How white your throat is!" he said. "How white your throat is!"

Myra stepped out, then, from among the covert coats on the rack. Her head was lifted high on the creamy column that supported it. She had her pride, had Myra.

"It's no whiter than it was a month ago, that I can see."

"I know it." His tone was humble, with a little pleading note in it. "I know a lot of things that I didn't know a month ago, Myra."

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DO AMERICAN WOMEN LOVE NATURE?

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Caper-Sauce*, by Fanny Fern

I read an article in _The Nation_ the other day, in which the writer deplores "that American women are not lovers of Nature." Now, sins enough both of omission and commission are laid to their charge, without adding to the list those that are baseless. "American women not lovers of Nature!" Where does the writer keep his eyes, that he does not see, even here in the city, in mid-winter, the parlor-windows of almost every house he passes, decorated by the American ladies who preside over it, with hanging baskets of flowering plants, with ivies and geraniums tastefully arranged, besides bouquets of fresh-cut flowers always upon the mantel? Even the humblest house will have its cracked pitcher filled

with green moss; as if unwilling to do without that little suggestion of Nature, although the fingers which tend it are coarse with washing, or sewing on shirts at six cents apiece. Did the writer never notice the "American women" going up and down Broadway? How impossible it is for them to resist stopping at the street corners to invest a few pennies in the little fragrant bunch of pansies or tuberose, for private delectation, and the adornment of their own pretty rooms at home! Then, too, I am a great haunter of green-houses and florists' shops generally; whom, by the way, I consider in the light of missionaries in this work-a-day world, to educate and stimulate our artistic propensities, by the various and beautiful arrangements of form and color, in their floral offerings; and I find there plenty of "American women" enthusiastic in their praises and lavish in their expenditures in this direction. Many of them are flowers themselves, bright, beautiful, lovely, beyond all the buds and sprays and tinted leaves they hover over, like so many humming-birds.

Then, again, when I go into the country each summer, I find "American ladies" rambling in the woods, with a keen appreciation of Nature in all its varied forms, from a lovely sunrise to the last faint chirp of the sleepest little bird who is safely nestled for the night in his leafy little home. I meet them too in the odorous warm autumn noons, with branches and garlands of gay-tinted leaves, so embarrassed with their wealth of richness that they cannot carry more, and yet unwilling to leave so many "_real beauties_" still trembling, unplucked, on the boughs above them. I see them taking infinite pains to press these bright leaves in books prepared for the purpose, that they may beautify their homes for the cold winter days. Sometimes the result of this painstaking is seen in the form of an ingenious lamp-shade, far more beautiful than one could purchase for any amount of money. Then, again, it will be in the leafy frame for a favorite picture; then again in a vase, the grouping of branches and tints in such perfect taste, that the most trained artistic eye could find no flaw or blemish.

Now, with all due deference to _The Nation_, in which this article appeared, I beg leave most emphatically to express a difference in opinion; the more so as this increasing interest in floral decorations, particularly those of the parlor windows, has been a matter of great congratulation with me; since the latter gives pleasure to many a passer-by who has neither the means nor time to spend in aught save the bare necessities of life. How many times I have seen some ragged little shivering child stand, spell-bound, before some sunlit window, gay with blossoming plants, and forgetting for the time the dirt and chill and squalor of her own wretched home! How many times the weary seamstress, resting her bundle upon the fence outside, while her eyes drank in their freshness! How many times the laboring man, with his little child beside

him, have I seen, as he raised him upon his shoulder to "see the pretty flowers." And this is principally why I rejoice that American women do love Nature. Those people who stop to look from the outside, are being educated the while to the beautiful, quite unknown to themselves; and these ladies are providing them this pleasure without cost.

I was very much struck, while in Newport last summer, with the educating effect of the superb floral decorations about the villas of the wealthy in that place; for no house there, how humble soever, but had its little emulative patch of bright flowers, or its climbing vines, or its window bouquet. No, no; The Nation must have been taking a Rip Van Winkle nap, I think, when it made this unfounded charge against "American Women."

* * * * *

GOOD-NIGHT.--How commonplace is this expression, and yet what volumes it may speak for all future time! We never listen to it, in passing, that this thought does not force itself upon us, be the tones in which it is uttered ever so gay. The lapse of a few fatal hours or minutes may so surround and hedge it in with horror, that of all the millions of words which a lifetime has recorded, these two little words alone shall seem to be remembered.

Good-night!

The little child has lisped it, as it passed, smiling, to a brighter morn than ours; the lover, with his gay dreams of the nuptial morrow; the wife and mother, with all the tangled threads of household care still in her fingers; the father, with the appealing eye of childhood all unanswered.

Good-night!

That seal upon days passed, and days to come. What hand so rash as to rend aside the veil that covers its morrow?

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THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Merry Tales*, by Mark Twain

There was a good deal of pleasant gossip about old Captain "Hurricane"

Jones, of the Pacific Ocean,—peace to his ashes! Two or three of us present had known him; I, particularly well, for I had made four sea-voyages with him. He was a very remarkable man. He was born on a ship; he picked up what little education he had among his shipmates; he began life in the forecabin, and climbed grade by grade to the captaincy. More than fifty years of his sixty-five were spent at sea. He had sailed all oceans, seen all lands, and borrowed a tint from all climates. When a man has been fifty years at sea, he necessarily knows nothing of men, nothing of the world but its surface, nothing of the world's thought, nothing of the world's learning but its A B C, and that blurred and distorted by the unfocussed lenses of an untrained mind. Such a man is only a gray and bearded child. That is what old Hurricane Jones was,—simply an innocent, lovable old infant. When his spirit was in repose he was as sweet and gentle as a girl; when his wrath was up he was a hurricane that made his nickname seem tamely descriptive. He was formidable in a fight, for he was of powerful build and dauntless courage. He was frescoed from head to heel with pictures and mottoes tattooed in red and blue India ink. I was with him one voyage when he got his last vacant space tattooed; this vacant space was around his left ankle. During three days he stumped about the ship with his ankle bare and swollen, and this legend gleaming red and angry out from a clouding of India ink: "Virtue is its own R'd." (There was a lack of room.) He was deeply and sincerely pious, and swore like a fish-woman. He considered swearing blameless, because sailors would not understand an order unilluminated by it. He was a profound Biblical scholar,—that is, he thought he was. He believed everything in the Bible, but he had his own methods of arriving at his beliefs. He was of the "advanced" school of thinkers, and applied natural laws to the interpretation of all miracles, somewhat on the plan of the people who make the six days of creation six geological epochs, and so forth. Without being aware of it, he was a rather severe satire on modern scientific religionists. Such a man as I have been describing is rabidly fond of disquisition and argument; one knows that without being told it.

One trip the captain had a clergyman on board, but did not know he was a clergyman, since the passenger list did not betray the fact. He took a great liking to this Rev. Mr. Peters, and talked with him a great deal: told him yarns, gave him toothsome scraps of personal history, and wove a glittering streak of profanity through his garrulous fabric that was refreshing to a spirit weary of the dull neutralities of undecorated speech. One day the captain said, "Peters, do you ever read the Bible?"

"Well—yes."

"I judge it ain't often, by the way you say it. Now, you tackle it in dead earnest once, and you'll find it'll pay. Don't you get discouraged,

but hang right on. First, you won't understand it; but by and by things will begin to clear up, and then you wouldn't lay it down to eat."

"Yes, I have heard that said."

"And it's so, too. There ain't a book that begins with it. It lays over 'em all, Peters. There's some pretty tough things in it,—there ain't any getting around that,—but you stick to them and think them out, and when once you get on the inside everything's plain as day."

"The miracles, too, captain?"

"Yes, sir! the miracles, too. Every one of them. Now, there's that business with the prophets of Baal; like enough that stumped you?"

"Well, I don't know but—"

"Own up, now; it stumped you. Well, I don't wonder. You hadn't had any experience in ravelling such things out, and naturally it was too many for you. Would you like to have me explain that thing to you, and show you how to get at the meat of these matters?"

"Indeed, I would, captain, if you don't mind."

Then the captain proceeded as follows: "I'll do it with pleasure. First, you see, I read and read, and thought and thought, till I got to understand what sort of people they were in the old Bible times, and then after that it was clear and easy. Now, this was the way I put it up, concerning Isaac[3] and the prophets of Baal. There was some mighty sharp men amongst the public characters of that old ancient day, and Isaac was one of them. Isaac had his failings,—plenty of them, too; it ain't for me to apologize for Isaac; he played on the prophets of Baal, and like enough he was justifiable, considering the odds that was against him. No, all I say is, 't wa'n't any miracle, and that I'll show you so's't you can see it yourself.

Footnote 3:

This is the captain's own mistake.

"Well, times had been getting rougher and rougher for prophets,—that is, prophets of Isaac's denomination. There were four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal in the community, and only one Presbyterian; that is, if Isaac was a Presbyterian, which I reckon he was, but it don't say. Naturally, the prophets of Baal took all the trade. Isaac was pretty low-spirited, I reckon, but he was a good deal of a man, and no doubt he

went a-propheying around, letting on to be doing a land-office business, but 't wa'n't any use; he couldn't run any opposition to amount to anything. By and by things got desperate with him; he sets his head to work and thinks it all out, and then what does he do? Why, he begins to throw out hints that the other parties are this and that and t'other,—nothing very definite, may be, but just kind of undermining their reputation in a quiet way. This made talk, of course, and finally got to the king. The king asked Isaac what he meant by his talk. Says Isaac, 'Oh, nothing particular; only, can they pray down fire from heaven on an altar? It ain't much, maybe, your majesty, only can they _do_ it? That's the idea.' So the king was a good deal disturbed, and he went to the prophets of Baal, and they said, pretty airy, that if he had an altar ready, _they_ were ready; and they intimated he better get it insured, too.

"So next morning all the children of Israel and their parents and the other people gathered themselves together. Well, here was that great crowd of prophets of Baal packed together on one side, and Isaac walking up and down all alone on the other, putting up his job. When time was called, Isaac let on to be comfortable and indifferent; told the other team to take the first innings. So they went at it, the whole four hundred and fifty, praying around the altar, very hopeful, and doing their level best. They prayed an hour,—two hours,—three hours,—and so on, plumb till noon. It wa'n't any use; they had n't took a trick. Of course they felt kind of ashamed before all those people, and well they might. Now, what would a magnanimous man do? Keep still, wouldn't he? Of course. What did Isaac do? He gravelled the prophets of Baal every way he could think of. Says he, 'You don't speak up loud enough; your god's asleep, like enough, or may be he's taking a walk; you want to holler, you know,'—or words to that effect; I don't recollect the exact language. Mind, I don't apologize for Isaac; he had his faults.

"Well, the prophets of Baal prayed along the best they knew how all the afternoon, and never raised a spark. At last, about sundown, they were all tuckered out, and they owned up and quit.

"What does Isaac do, now? He steps up and says to some friends of his, there, 'Pour four barrels of water on the altar!' Everybody was astonished; for the other side had prayed at it dry, you know, and got whitewashed. They poured it on. Says he, 'Heave on four more barrels.' Then he says, 'Heave on four more.' Twelve barrels, you see, altogether. The water ran all over the altar, and all down the sides, and filled up a trench around it that would hold a couple of hogsheads,—'measures,' it says; I reckon it means about a hogshead. Some of the people were going to put on their things and go, for they allowed he was crazy. They didn't know Isaac. Isaac knelt down and began to pray: he strung along,

and strung along, about the heathen in distant lands, and about the sister churches, and about the state and the country at large, and about those that's in authority in the government, and all the usual programme, you know, till everybody had got tired and gone to thinking about something else, and then, all of a sudden, when nobody was noticing, he outs with a match and rakes it on the under side of his leg, and pff! up the whole thing blazes like a house afire! Twelve barrels of _water_? _Petroleum_, sir, PETROLEUM! that's what it was!"

"Petroleum, captain?"

"Yes, sir; the country was full of it. Isaac knew all about that. You read the Bible. Don't you worry about the tough places. They ain't tough when you come to think them out and throw light on them. There ain't a thing in the Bible but what is true; all you want is to go prayerfully to work and cipher out how 't was done."

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HOW TO TEACH JOURNALISM

Project Gutenberg's *Bill Nye's Sparks*, by Edgar Wilson Nye AKA Bill Nye

I AM GLAD to know Cornell University is to I establish a department of journalism next September. I have always claimed that journalism could be taught in universities and colleges just as successfully as any other athletic exercise. Of course you cannot teach a boy how to jerk a giant journal from the clutches of decay and make of it a robust and rip snorting shaper and trimmer of public opinion, in whose counting-room people will walk all over each other in their mad efforts to insert advertisements. You cannot teach this in a school any more than you can teach a boy how to discover the open Polar Sea, but you can teach him the rudiments and save him a good deal of time experimenting with himself.

Boys spend small fortunes and the best years of their lives learning the simplest truths in relation to journalism. We grope on blindly, learning this year perhaps how to distinguish an italic shooting-stick when we see it, or how to eradicate type lice from a standing galley, learning next year how to sustain life on an annual pass and a sample early-rose potato weighing four pounds and measuring eleven inches in circumference. This is a slow and tedious way to obtain journalistic training. If this can be avoided or abbreviated it will be a great boon.

As I understand it, the department in Cornell University will not deal so much with actual newspaper experience as it will with construction

and style in writing. This is certainly a good move, for we must admit that we can improve very greatly our style and the purity of our English. For instance, I select an exchange at random, and on the telegraphic page I find the details of a horrible crime. It seems that an old lady, who lived by herself almost, and who had amassed between \$16 and \$17, was awakened by an assassin, dragged from her bed and cruelly murdered. The large telegraph headline reads: "Drug from her bed and murdered!" This is incorrect in orthography, syntax and prosody, bad in form and inelegant in style. Carefully parsing the word drug as it appears here, I find that it does not agree with anything in number, gender or person. I do not like to criticise the style of others when I know that my own is so faulty, but I am sure that the word drug should not be used in this way.

Take the following, also, from the Kansas correspondence of the Statesville (N.C.) Landmark :

"There were several bad accidents in and around Clear Water during my absence from home. The saddest one was the shooting of one Peter Peterson by his father. They were out rabbit-hunting in the snow. A rabbit got up and started to run. The son was in a swag of a place and the father was taking aim at the rabbit. The son at the same time was trying to get a shot at it and, not knowing that his father was shooting, ran between the rabbit and his father and was killed dead, falling on the snow with his gun grasped in his hands and never moved. He still carried that pleasant smile which he had on, in expectation of shooting that jack rabbit, when put in the grave. Wheat is selling at about 60 cents; corn, 40 to 50 cents; fat hogs, gross, 44 to 41; fat steers, 41; butcher's stock, 2 cents."

It is hard to say just exactly wherein this is faulty, but something is the matter with it. I would like to get an expression of opinion from those who take an interest in such things, as to whether the fault is in orthoepy, orthography, anatomy, obituary or price current, or whether it consists in writing several features too closely in the same paragraph.

It would also be a good idea to establish a chair for advertisers in some practical college, in order that they might run in for a few hours and learn how to write an advertisement so that it would express in the most direct way what they desired to state. Here is an advertisement, for instance, which is given exactly as written and punctuated:

Mrs. Dr. Edwards,

=====

TONY and the BEETLES

by Philip K. Dick

[Transcriber's Note: This Project Gutenberg etext was produced from *Orbit volume 1 number 2, 1953.*

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Reddish-yellow sunlight filtered through the thick quartz windows into the sleep-compartment. Tony Rossi yawned, stirred a little, then opened his black eyes and sat up quickly. With one motion he tossed the covers back and slid to the warm metal floor. He clicked off his alarm clock and hurried to the closet.

It looked like a nice day. The landscape outside was motionless, undisturbed by winds or dust-shift. The boy's heart pounded excitedly. He pulled his trousers on, zipped up the reinforced mesh, struggled into his heavy canvas shirt, and then sat down on the edge of the cot to tug on his boots. He closed the seams around their tops and then did the same with his gloves. Next he adjusted the pressure on his pump unit and strapped it between his shoulder blades. He grabbed his helmet from the dresser, and he was ready for the day.

In the dining-compartment his mother and father had finished breakfast. Their voices drifted to him as he clattered down the ramp. A disturbed murmur; he paused to listen. What were they talking about? Had he done something wrong, again?

And then he caught it. Behind their voices was another voice. Static and crackling pops. The all-system audio signal from Rigel IV. They had it turned up full blast; the dull thunder of the monitor's voice boomed loudly. The war. Always the war. He sighed, and stepped out into the dining-compartment.

"Morning," his father muttered.

"Good morning, dear," his mother said absently. She sat with her head turned to one side, wrinkles of concentration webbing her forehead. Her thin lips were drawn together in a tight line of concern. His father had pushed his dirty dishes back and was smoking, elbows on the table, dark hairy arms bare and muscular. He was scowling, intent on the jumbled roar from the speaker above the sink.

"How's it going?" Tony asked. He slid into his chair and reached

automatically for the ersatz grapefruit. "Any news from Orion?"

Neither of them answered. They didn't hear him. He began to eat his grapefruit. Outside, beyond the little metal and plastic housing unit, sounds of activity grew. Shouts and muffled crashes, as rural merchants and their trucks rumbled along the highway toward Karnet. The reddish daylight swelled; Betelgeuse was rising quietly and majestically.

"Nice day," Tony said. "No flux wind. I think I'll go down to the n-quarter awhile. We're building a neat spaceport, a model, of course, but we've been able to get enough materials to lay out strips for--"

With a savage snarl his father reached out and struck the audio roar immediately died. "I knew it!" He got up and moved angrily away from the table. "I told them it would happen. They shouldn't have moved so soon. Should have built up Class A supply bases, first."

"Isn't our main fleet moving in from Bellatrix?" Tony's mother fluttered anxiously. "According to last night's summary the worst that can happen is Orion IX and X will be dumped."

Joseph Rossi laughed harshly. "The hell with last night's summary. They know as well as I do what's happening."

"What's happening?" Tony echoed, as he pushed aside his grapefruit and began to ladle out dry cereal. "Are we losing the battle?"

"Yes!" His father's lips twisted. "Earthmen, losing to--to beetles. I told them. But they couldn't wait. My God, there's ten good years left in this system. Why'd they have to push on? Everybody knew Orion would be tough. The whole damn beetle fleet's strung out around there. Waiting for us. And we have to barge right in."

"But nobody ever thought beetles would fight," Leah Rossi protested mildly. "Everybody thought they'd just fire a few blasts and then--"

"They have to fight! Orion's the last jump-off. If they don't fight here, where the hell can they fight?" Rossi swore savagely. "Of course they're fighting. We have all their planets except the inner Orion string--not that they're worth much, but it's the principle of the thing. If we'd built up strong supply bases, we could have broken up the beetle fleet and really clobbered it."

"Don't say 'beetle,'" Tony murmured, as he finished his cereal. "They're Pas-udeti, same as here. The word 'beetle' comes from Betelgeuse. An Arabian word we invented ourselves."

Joe Rossi's mouth opened and closed. "What are you, a goddamn beetle-lover?"

"Joe," Leah snapped. "For heaven's sake."

Rossi moved toward the door. "If I was ten years younger I'd be out there. I'd really show those shiny-shelled insects what the hell they're up against. Them and their junky beat-up old hulks. Converted freighters!" His eyes blazed. "When I think of them shooting down Terran cruisers with our boys in them--"

"Orion's their system," Tony murmured.

"Their system! When the hell did you get to be an authority on space law? Why, I ought to--" He broke off, choked with rage. "My own kid," he muttered. "One more crack out of you today and I'll hang one on you you'll feel the rest of the week."

Tony pushed his chair back. "I won't be around here today. I'm going into Karnet, with my EEP."

"Yeah, to play with beetles!"

Tony said nothing. He was already sliding his helmet in place and snapping the clamps tight. As he pushed through the back door, into the lock membrane, he unscrewed his oxygen tap and set the tank filter into action. An automatic response, conditioned by a lifetime spent on a colony planet in an alien system.

* * * * *

A faint flux wind caught at him and swept yellow-red dust around his boots. Sunlight glittered from the metal roof of his family's housing unit, one of endless rows of squat boxes set in the sandy slope, protected by the line of ore-refining installations against the horizon. He made an impatient signal, and from the storage shed his EEP came gliding out, catching the sunlight on its chrome trim.

"We're going down into Karnet," Tony said, unconsciously slipping into the Pas dialect. "Hurry up!"

The EEP took up its position behind him, and he started briskly down the slope, over the shifting sand, toward the road. There were quite a few traders out, today. It was a good day for the market; only a fourth of the year was fit for travel. Betelgeuse was an erratic and undependable

sun, not at all like Sol (according to the edutapes, fed to Tony four hours a day, six days a week--he had never seen Sol himself).

He reached the noisy road. Pas-udeti were everywhere. Whole groups of them, with their primitive combustion-driven trucks, battered and filthy, motors grinding protestingly. He waved at the trucks as they pushed past him. After a moment one slowed down. It was piled with _tis_, bundled heaps of gray vegetables dried, and prepared for the table. A staple of the Pas-udeti diet. Behind the wheel lounged a dark-faced elderly Pas, one arm over the open window, a rolled leaf between his lips. He was like all other Pas-udeti; lank and hard-shelled, encased in a brittle sheath in which he lived and died.

"You want a ride?" the Pas murmured--required protocol when an Earthman on foot was encountered.

"Is there room for my EEP?"

The Pas made a careless motion with his claw. "It can run behind." Sardonic amusement touched his ugly old face. "If it gets to Karnet we'll sell it for scrap. We can use a few condensers and relay tubing. We're short on electronic maintenance stuff."

"I know," Tony said solemnly, as he climbed into the cabin of the truck. "It's all been sent to the big repair base at Orion I. For your warfleet."

Amusement vanished from the leathery face. "Yes, the warfleet." He turned away and started up the truck again. In the back, Tony's EEP had scrambled up on the load of _tis_ and was gripping precariously with its magnetic lines.

Tony noticed the Pas-udeti's sudden change of expression, and he was puzzled. He started to speak to him--but now he noticed unusual quietness among the other Pas, in the other trucks, behind and in front of his own. The war, of course. It had swept through this system a century ago; these people had been left behind. Now all eyes were on Orion, on the battle between the Terran warfleet and the Pas-udeti collection of armed freighters.

"Is it true," Tony asked carefully, "that you're winning?"

The elderly Pas grunted. "We hear rumors."

Tony considered. "My father says Terra went ahead too fast. He says we should have consolidated. We didn't assemble adequate supply bases. He

used to be an officer, when he was younger. He was with the fleet for two years."

The Pas was silent a moment. "It's true," he said at last, "that when you're so far from home, supply is a great problem. We, on the other hand, don't have that. We have no distances to cover."

"Do you know anybody fighting?"

"I have distant relatives." The answer was vague; the Pas obviously didn't want to talk about it.

"Have you ever seen your warfleet?"

"Not as it exists now. When this system was defeated most of our units were wiped out. Remnants limped to Orion and joined the Orion fleet."

"Your relatives were with the remnants?"

"That's right."

"Then you were alive when this planet was taken?"

"Why do you ask?" The old Pas quivered violently. "What business is it of yours?"

Tony leaned out and watched the walls and buildings of Karnet grow ahead of them. Karnet was an old city. It had stood thousands of years. The Pas-udeti civilization was stable; it had reached a certain point of technocratic development and then leveled off. The Pas had inter-system ships that had carried people and freight between planets in the days before the Terran Confederation. They had combustion-driven cars, audiophones, a power network of a magnetic type. Their plumbing was satisfactory and their medicine was highly advanced. They had art forms, emotional and exciting. They had a vague religion.

"Who do you think will win the battle?" Tony asked.

"I don't know." With a sudden jerk the old Pas brought the truck to a crashing halt. "This is as far as I go. Please get out and take your EEP with you."

Tony faltered in surprise. "But aren't you going--?"

"No farther!"

Tony pushed the door open. He was vaguely uneasy; there was a hard, fixed expression on the leathery face, and the old creature's voice had a sharp edge he had never heard before. "Thanks," he murmured. He hopped down into the red dust and signaled his EEP. It released its magnetic lines, and instantly the truck started up with a roar, passing on inside the city.

Tony watched it go, still dazed. The hot dust lapped at his ankles; he automatically moved his feet and slapped at his trousers. A truck honked, and his EEP quickly moved him from the road, up to the level pedestrian ramp. Pas-udeti in swarms moved by, endless lines of rural people hurrying into Karnet on their daily business. A massive public bus had stopped by the gate and was letting off passengers. Male and female Pas. And children. They laughed and shouted; the sounds of their voices blended with the low hum of the city.

"Going in?" a sharp Pas-udeti voice sounded close behind him. "Keep moving--you're blocking the ramp."

It was a young female, with a heavy armload clutched in her claws. Tony felt embarrassed; female Pas had a certain telepathic ability, part of their sexual make-up. It was effective on Earthmen at close range.

"Here," she said. "Give me a hand."

Tony nodded his head, and the EEP accepted the female's heavy armload. "I'm visiting the city," Tony said, as they moved with the crowd toward the gates. "I got a ride most of the way, but the driver let me off out here."

"You're from the settlement?"

"Yes."

She eyed him critically. "You've always lived here, haven't you?"

"I was born here. My family came here from Earth four years before I was born. My father was an officer in the fleet. He earned an Emigration Priority."

"So you've never seen your own planet. How old are you?"

"Ten years. Terran."

"You shouldn't have asked the driver so many questions."

They passed through the decontamination shield and into the city. An information square loomed ahead; Pas men and women were packed around it. Moving chutes and transport cars rumbled everywhere. Buildings and ramps and open-air machinery; the city was sealed in a protective dust-proof envelope. Tony unfastened his helmet and clipped it to his belt. The air was stale-smelling, artificial, but usable.

"Let me tell you something," the young female said carefully, as she strode along the foot-ramp beside Tony. "I wonder if this is a good day for you to come into Karnet. I know you've been coming here regularly to play with your friends. But perhaps today you ought to stay at home, in your settlement."

"Why?"

"Because today everybody is upset."

"I know," Tony said. "My mother and father were upset. They were listening to the news from our base in the Rigel system."

"I don't mean your family. Other people are listening, too. These people here. My race."

"They're upset, all right," Tony admitted. "But I come here all the time. There's nobody to play with at the settlement, and anyhow we're working on a project."

"A model spaceport."

"That's right." Tony was envious. "I sure wish I was a telepath. It must be fun."

The female Pas-udeti was silent. She was deep in thought. "What would happen," she asked, "if your family left here and returned to Earth?"

"That couldn't happen. There's no room for us on Earth. C-bombs destroyed most of Asia and North America back in the Twentieth Century."

"Suppose you _had_ to go back?"

Tony did not understand. "But we can't. Habitable portions of Earth are overcrowded. Our main problem is finding places for Terrans to live, in other systems." He added, "And anyhow, I don't particularly want to go to Terra. I'm used to it here. All my friends are here."

"I'll take my packages," the female said. "I go this other way, down

this third-level ramp."

Tony nodded to his EEP and it lowered the bundles into the female's claws. She lingered a moment, trying to find the right words.

"Good luck," she said.

"With what?"

She smiled faintly, ironically. "With your model spaceport. I hope you and your friends get to finish it."

"Of course we'll finish it," Tony said, surprised. "It's almost done." What did she mean?

The Pas-udeti woman hurried off before he could ask her. Tony was troubled and uncertain; more doubts filled him. After a moment he headed slowly into the lane that took him toward the residential section of the city. Past the stores and factories, to the place where his friends lived.

The group of Pas-udeti children eyed him silently as he approached. They had been playing in the shade of an immense _hengelo_, whose ancient branches drooped and swayed with the air currents pumped through the city. Now they sat unmoving.

"I didn't expect you today," B'prith said, in an expressionless voice.

Tony halted awkwardly, and his EEP did the same. "How are things?" he murmured.

"Fine."

"I got a ride part way."

"Fine."

Tony squatted down in the shade. None of the Pas children stirred. They were small, not as large as Terran children. Their shells had not hardened, had not turned dark and opaque, like horn. It gave them a soft, unformed appearance, but at the same time it lightened their load. They moved more easily than their elders; they could hop and skip around, still. But they were not skipping right now.

"What's the matter?" Tony demanded. "What's wrong with everybody?"

No one answered.

"Where's the model?" he asked. "Have you fellows been working on it?"

After a moment Llyre nodded slightly.

Tony felt dull anger rise up inside him. "Say something! What's the matter? What're you all mad about?"

"Mad?" B'prith echoed. "We're not mad."

Tony scratched aimlessly in the dust. He knew what it was. The war, again. The battle going on near Orion. His anger burst up wildly. "Forget the war. Everything was fine yesterday, before the battle."

"Sure," Llyre said. "It was fine."

Tony caught the edge to his voice. "It happened a hundred years ago. It's not my fault."

"Sure," B'prith said.

"This is my home. Isn't it? Haven't I got as much right here as anybody else? I was born here."

"Sure," Llyre said, tonelessly.

Tony appealed to them helplessly. "Do you have to act this way? You didn't act this way yesterday. I was here yesterday--all of us were here yesterday. What's happened since yesterday?"

"The battle," B'prith said.

"What difference does that make? Why does that change everything? There's always war. There've been battles all the time, as long as I can remember. What's different about this?"

B'prith broke apart a clump of dirt with his strong claws. After a moment he tossed it away and got slowly to his feet. "Well," he said thoughtfully, "according to our audio relay, it looks as if our fleet is going to win, this time."

"Yes," Tony agreed, not understanding. "My father says we didn't build up adequate supply bases. We'll probably have to fall back to...." And then the impact hit him. "You mean, for the first time in a hundred years--"

"Yes," Llyre said, also getting up. The others got up, too. They moved away from Tony, toward the near-by house. "We're winning. The Terran flank was turned, half an hour ago. Your right wing has folded completely."

Tony was stunned. "And it matters. It matters to all of you."

"Matters!" B'prith halted, suddenly blazing out in fury. "Sure it matters! For the first time--in a century. The first time in our lives we're beating you. We have you on the run, you--" He choked out the word, almost spat it out. "You white-grubs!"

They disappeared into the house. Tony sat gazing stupidly down at the ground, his hands still moving aimlessly. He had heard the word before, seen it scrawled on walls and in the dust near the settlement. _White-grubs._ The Pas term of derision for Terrans. Because of their softness, their whiteness. Lack of hard shells. Pulpy, doughy skin. But they had never dared say it out loud, before. To an Earthman's face.

Beside him, his EEP stirred restlessly. Its intricate radio mechanism sensed the hostile atmosphere. Automatic relays were sliding into place; circuits were opening and closing.

"It's all right," Tony murmured, getting slowly up. "Maybe we'd better go back."

He moved unsteadily toward the ramp, completely shaken. The EEP walked calmly ahead, its metal face blank and confident, feeling nothing, saying nothing. Tony's thoughts were a wild turmoil; he shook his head, but the crazy spinning kept up. He couldn't make his mind slow down, lock in place.

"Wait a minute," a voice said. B'prith's voice, from the open doorway. Cold and withdrawn, almost unfamiliar.

"What do you want?"

B'prith came toward him, claws behind his back in the formal Pas-udeti posture, used between total strangers. "You shouldn't have come here, today."

"I know," Tony said.

B'prith got out a bit of _tis_ stalk and began to roll it into a tube. He pretended to concentrate on it. "Look," he said. "You said you have a

right here. But you don't."

"I--" Tony murmured.

"Do you understand why not? You said it isn't your fault. I guess not. But it's not my fault, either. Maybe it's nobody's fault. I've known you a long time."

"Five years. Terran."

B'prith twisted the stalk up and tossed it away. "Yesterday we played together. We worked on the spaceport. But we can't play today. My family said to tell you not to come here any more." He hesitated, and did not look Tony in the face. "I was going to tell you, anyhow. Before they said anything."

"Oh," Tony said.

"Everything that's happened today--the battle, our fleet's stand. We didn't know. We didn't dare hope. You see? A century of running. First this system. Then the Rigel system, all the planets. Then the other Orion stars. We fought here and there--scattered fights. Those that got away joined up. We supplied the base at Orion--you people didn't know. But there was no hope; at least, nobody thought there was." He was silent a moment. "Funny," he said, "what happens when your back's to the wall, and there isn't any further place to go. Then you have to fight."

"If our supply bases--" Tony began thickly, but B'prith cut him off savagely.

"Your supply bases! Don't you understand? We're beating you! Now you'll have to get out! All you white-grubs. Out of our system!"

Tony's EEP moved forward ominously. B'prith saw it. He bent down, snatched up a rock, and hurled it straight at the EEP. The rock clanged off the metal hull and bounced harmlessly away. B'prith snatched up another rock. Llyre and the others came quickly out of the house. An adult Pas loomed up behind them. Everything was happening too fast. More rocks crashed against the EEP. One struck Tony on the arm.

"Get out!" B'prith screamed. "Don't come back! This is our planet!" His claws snatched at Tony. "We'll tear you to pieces if you--"

Tony smashed him in the chest. The soft shell gave like rubber, and the Pas stumbled back. He wobbled and fell over, gasping and screeching.

"_Beetle_", Tony breathed hoarsely. Suddenly he was terrified. A crowd of Pas-udetis was forming rapidly. They surged on all sides, hostile faces, dark and angry, a rising thunder of rage.

More stones showered. Some struck the EEP, others fell around Tony, near his boots. One whizzed past his face. Quickly he slid his helmet in place. He was scared. He knew his EEP's E-signal had already gone out, but it would be minutes before a ship could come. Besides, there were other Earthmen in the city to be taken care of; there were Earthmen all over the planet. In all the cities. On all the twenty-three Betelgeuse planets. On the fourteen Rigel planets. On the other Orion planets.

"We have to get out of here," he muttered to the EEP. "Do something!"

A stone hit him on the helmet. The plastic cracked; air leaked out, and then the auto-seal filmed over. More stones were falling. The Pas swarmed close, a yelling, seething mass of black-sheathed creatures. He could smell them, the acrid body-odor of insects, hear their claws snap, feel their weight.

The EEP threw its heat beam on. The beam shifted in a wide band toward the crowd of Pas-udetis. Crude hand weapons appeared. A clatter of bullets burst around Tony; they were firing at the EEP. He was dimly aware of the metal body beside him. A shuddering crash--the EEP was toppled over. The crowd poured over it; the metal hull was lost from sight.

Like a demented animal, the crowd tore at the struggling EEP. A few of them smashed in its head; others tore off struts and shiny arm-sections. The EEP ceased struggling. The crowd moved away, panting and clutching jagged remains. They saw Tony.

As the first line of them reached for him, the protective envelope high above them shattered. A Terran scout ship thundered down, heat beam screaming. The crowd scattered in confusion, some firing, some throwing stones, others leaping for safety.

Tony picked himself up and made his way unsteadily toward the spot where the scout was landing.

* * * * *

"I'm sorry," Joe Rossi said gently. He touched his son on the shoulder. "I shouldn't have let you go down there today. I should have known."

Tony sat hunched over in the big plastic easychair. He rocked back and

forth, face pale with shock. The scout ship which had rescued him had immediately headed back toward Karnet; there were other Earthmen to bring out, besides this first load. The boy said nothing. His mind was blank. He still heard the roar of the crowd, felt its hate--a century of pent-up fury and resentment. The memory drove out everything else; it was all around him, even now. And the sight of the floundering EEP, the metallic ripping sound, as its arms and legs were torn off and carried away.

His mother dabbed at his cuts and scratches with antiseptic. Joe Rossi shakily lit a cigarette and said, "If your EEP hadn't been along they'd have killed you. Beetles." He shuddered. "I never should have let you go down there. All this time.... They might have done it any time, any day. Knifed you. Cut you open with their filthy goddamn claws."

Below the settlement the reddish-yellow sunlight glinted on gunbarrels. Already, dull booms echoed against the crumbling hills. The defense ring was going into action. Black shapes darted and scurried up the side of the slope. Black patches moved out from Karnet, toward the Terran settlement, across the dividing line the Confederation surveyors had set up a century ago. Karnet was a bubbling pot of activity. The whole city rumbled with feverish excitement.

Tony raised his head. "They--they turned our flank."

"Yeah." Joe Rossi stubbed out his cigarette. "They sure did. That was at one o'clock. At two they drove a wedge right through the center of our line. Split the fleet in half. Broke it up--sent it running. Picked us off one by one as we fell back. Christ, they're like maniacs. Now that they've got the scent, the taste of our blood."

"But it's getting better," Leah fluttered. "Our main fleet units are beginning to appear."

"We'll get them," Joe muttered. "It'll take a while. But by God we'll wipe them out. Every last one of them. If it takes a thousand years. We'll follow every last ship down--we'll get them all." His voice rose in frenzy. "Beetles! Goddamn insects! When I think of them, trying to hurt my kid, with their filthy black claws--"

"If you were younger, you'd be in the line," Leah said. "It's not your fault you're too old. The heart strain's too great. You did your job. They can't let an older person take chances. It's not your fault."

Joe clenched his fists. "I feel so--futile. If there was only something I could do."

"The fleet will take care of them," Leah said soothingly. "You said so yourself. They'll hunt every one of them down. Destroy them all. There's nothing to worry about."

Joe sagged miserably. "It's no use. Let's cut it out. Let's stop kidding ourselves."

"What do you mean?"

"Face it! We're not going to win, not this time. We went too far. Our time's come."

There was silence.

Tony sat up a little. "When did you know?"

"I've known a long time."

"I found out today. I didn't understand, at first. This is--stolen ground. I was born here, but it's stolen ground."

"Yes. It's stolen. It doesn't belong to us."

"We're here because we're stronger. But now we're not stronger. We're being beaten."

"They know Terrans can be licked. Like anybody else." Joe Rossi's face was gray and flabby. "We took their planets away from them. Now they're taking them back. It'll be a while, of course. We'll retreat slowly. It'll be another five centuries going back. There're a lot of systems between here and Sol."

Tony shook his head, still uncomprehending. "Even Llyre and B'prith. All of them. Waiting for their time to come. For us to lose and go away again. Where we came from."

Joe Rossi paced back and forth. "Yeah, we'll be retreating from now on. Giving ground, instead of taking it. It'll be like this today--losing fights, draws. Stalemates and worse."

He raised his feverish eyes toward the ceiling of the little metal housing unit, face wild with passion and misery.

"But, by God, we'll give them a run for their money. All the way back! Every inch!"

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THE COWBOY AND THE LADY AND HER PA

By Irvin S. Cobb

A Story of a Fish out of Water

from The Project Gutenberg ebook of *The cowboy and the lady and her pa*
Transcriber's Note: This story appeared in the September, 1926 issue
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From up on the first level of the first shelf of the wagon road above Avalanche Creek came the voice of Dad Wheelis, the wagon-train boss, addressing his front span. The mules had halted at the head of the steep grade to twist about in the traces and, with six 'cello-shaped heads stretched over the rim and twice that many somber eyes fixed on the abyss swimming in a green haze beneath them, to contemplate its outspread glories while they got their wind back. It became evident that Dad thought the breathing space sufficiently had been prolonged. On a beautiful clearness his words dropped down through the spicy dry air.

"Git up!" he bade the sextet with an affectionate violence, and you could hear his whip-lash where it crackled like a string of firecrackers above the drooping ears of the lead team. "Git up, you scenery-lovin' _so-and-soes_!"

There was an agonized whine of tires and hubs growing faint and then fainter and Mrs. Hector Gatling sighed with a profound appreciation. "How prodigal nature is out in these Western wilds!" she said.

"Certainly does throw a wicked prod," agreed her daughter, Miss Shirley Gatling. But her eyes were not fixed where her mother's were.

"Such a climate!" affirmed the senior lady, flinching slightly that the argot of a newer and an irreverent generation should be invoked in this cathedral place. "Such views! Such picturesque types everywhere!"

"Not bad-looking mountains across over yonder, at that," said Mr. Gatling, husband and father of the above, giving his gestured

indorsement to an endless vista of serrated peaks of an average height of not less than seven thousand feet. "Not bad at all, so long as you don't have to hoof up any of 'em."

"_Mong père_, he also grows poetic, is it not?" murmured Miss Gatling. "Now, who'd have ever thunk it, knowing him in his native haunts back in that dear Pittsburgh!"

Her glance still was leveled in a different direction from the one in which her elders gazed. Mr. Gatling twisted about so that a foldable camp-chair creaked under his weight, and looked through his glasses in the same quarter where his daughter looked. His forehead drew into wrinkles.

Miss Gatling stood up, a slim, trim figure in her riding-boots and her well-tailored breeches and with a gay little shirt drawn snugly down inside her waistband and held there by a broad brilliant girdle of squaw's beadwork. She settled a large sombrero on her bobbed hair and stepped away from them over the pine-needles and thence down toward the roaring creek. The morning sunlight came slanting through the lower tree boughs and picked out and made shiny glitters of the heavy Mexican silver spurs at her heels and the wide Navaho silver bracelet that was set on her right wrist. She passed between two squared boulders that might have been the lichened tombs for a couple of Babylon's kings.

"Continue, I pray you, dear parents, to sit and invite your souls, if any," she called back. "I go to make sure they're putting plenty of cold victuals in the lunch kit. Yesterday noon, you'll remember, we darn' near starved. For you, the beckon and the lure of the wonderland. But for me and my girlish gastric juices--chow and lots of it!"

Mr. Gatling said nothing for a minute or two, but he took off his cap as though to make more room for additional furrows forming on his brow.

"Mmph!" he remarked presently. Mrs. Gatling emerged promptly from her own reverie. It was his commonest way of engaging her attention--that _mmphing_ sound was. Lacking vowels though it did, its emphasis of uneasiness was quite apparent to her schooled ears.

"What's wrong, dear?" she asked. "Still sore from all that dreadful horseback riding?"

"It's that girl," he told her; "that Shirley of ours. She's the one

I'm worried about."

"Why, goodness gracious!" she cried. "What's wrong with Shirley?"

"Look at her. That's all I ask--just look at her."

Mrs. Gatling, who was slightly near-sighted in more ways than one, squinted at the withdrawing figure.

"Why, the child never seemed happier or healthier in her life," she protested, still peering. "Why, only last Monday--or was it Tuesday; no, Monday--I remember distinctly now it was Monday because that was the day we got caught in the snowstorm coming through Swift Current Pass--only last Monday you were saying yourself how well and rosy she was looking."

"I don't mean that--she's a bunch of limber young whalebones. Look where she's going! That's what I mean. Look what she's doing!"

"Why, what is she doing that's out of the way, I'd like to know?" demanded his puzzled wife, now jealously on the defensive for her young.

"She's doing what she's been doing every chance she got these last four-five days, that's what." Mr. Gatling was manifesting an attitude somewhat common in husbands and fathers when dealing with their domestic problems. He preferably would flank the subject rather than bore straight at it, hoping by these roundabout tactics to obtain confirmation for his suspicions before he ever voiced them. "Got eyes in your head, haven't you? All right then, use 'em."

"Hector Gatling, for a sane man you do get the queerest notions in your brain sometimes! What on earth possesses you? Hasn't the child a perfect right to stroll down there and watch those three guides packing up? You know she's been trying to learn to make that pearl knot or turquoise knot or whatever it is they call it. What possible harm can there be in her learning how to tie a pearl knot?"

"Diamond hitch, diamond hitch," he corrected her testily. "Not pearls, but diamonds; not knots, but hitches! You'd better try to remember it, too--diamonds and hitches usually figure in the thing that I've got on my mind. And, if you'll be so kind as to observe her closely, you'll see that it isn't those three guides she's so interested in. It's one guide out of the three. And it's getting serious, or I'm all wrong. Now then, do you get my drift, or must I make plans and specifications?"

"Oh!" The exclamation was freighted with shock and with sorrow but with incredulity too, and now she was fluttering her feathers in alarm, if a middle-aged lady dressed in tweed knickerbockers and a Boy Scout's shirt may be said to have any feathers to flutter. "Oh, Hector, you don't mean it! You can't mean it! A child who's traveled and seen the world! A child who's had every advantage that wealth and social position and all could give her! A child who's a member of the Junior League! A child who's--who Hector, you're crazy. Hector, you know it's utterly impossible--utterly! It's preposterous!" Womanlike, she debated against a growing private dread. Then, still being womanlike, she pressed the opposing side for proof to destroy her counter-argument: "Hector, you've seen something--you've overheard something. Tell me this minute what it was you overheard!"

"I've overheard nothing. Think I'm going snooping around eavesdropping and spying on Shirley? I've never done any of that on her yet and I'm too old to begin now and too fat. But I've seen a-plenty."

"Oh, pshaw! I guess if there'd been anything afoot I'd have seen it myself first what with my mother's intuition and all! Oh, pshaw!" But Mrs. Gatling's derisive rejoinder lacked conviction.

"I've had the feeling for longer than these last few days," continued Mr. Gatling despondently. "But I couldn't put my hand on it, not at first. I tried to fool myself by saying it was this Wild Western flubdub and stuff getting into her blood and she'd get over it, soon as the attack had run its course. First loading up with all that Indian junk, then saying she felt as though she never wanted to do anything but be natural and stay out here and rough it for the rest of her life, and now here all of a sudden getting so much more flip and slangy than usual. That's the worst symptom yet--that slang is."

"In your day, ma'am, when a girl fell in love or thought she had, she went and got all mushed-up and sentimental; went mooning around sentimentalizing and rhapsodizing and romanticking and everything. All of you but the strong-minded ones did and I guess they must have mushed-up some too, on the sly. Yes'm, that's what you did--you mushed-up." His tone was accusing, condemning, as though he dealt with ancient offenses which not even the passage of the years might condone. "But now it's different with them. They get slangier and flippier and they let on to make fun of their own affections. And that's what Miss Shirley is doing right now this very minute, or

else I'm the worst misled man in the entire state of Montana."

"Maybe--maybe----" The matron sputtered as her distress mounted. "Of course I'm not admitting that you're right, Hector--the mere suggestion of such a thing is simply incredible--but on the bare chance that the child might be getting silly notions into her head maybe I'd better speak to her. I'm so much older than she is that----"

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"You said it then!" With a grim firmness Mr. Gatling interrupted. "You're so much older than she is; that's your trouble. And I'm suffering from the same incurable complaint. People our age who've got children growing up go around bleating that young people are different from the way young people were when we were young. They're not. They're just the same as we were--same impulses, same emotions, same dampfoolishness, same everything--but they've got a new way of expressing 'em. And then we say we can't understand them. Knock thirty years off of our lives and we'd understand all right because then we'd be just the same as they are. So you'll not say a word to that youngster of ours--not yet awhile, you won't. Nor me, neither." Grammar, considered as such, never had meant very much to Mr. Gatling, that masterful, self-educated man.

"But if I pointed out a few things to her--if I warned her----"

"Ma'am, you'll perhaps remember your own daddy wasn't so terribly happy over the prospect when I started sparking you. After I'd come courting and had gone on home again I guess it was as much as the old man could do to keep from taking a shovel and shoveling my tracks out of the front yard. But he had sense enough to keep his mouth shut where you were concerned. Suppose he'd tried to influence you against me, tried to break off the match--what would have happened? You'd have thought you were oppressed and persecuted and you'd have grabbed for me even quicker than you did."

"Why, Hector Gatling, I never grabbed----"

"I'm merely using a figure of speech. But no, he had too much gumption to undertake the stern-father racket. He locked his jaw and took it out in nasty looks and let nature take its course, and the consequence was we got married in the First Methodist church with bridesmaids and old shoes and kinsfolks and all the other painful details instead of me sneaking you out of a back window some dark night and us running off together in a side-bar buggy. No, ma'am, if

you'll take a tip from an old retired yardmaster of the Lackawanna, forty-seven years, man and boy, with one road, you'll----"

"You never worked a day as a railroad man and you know it."

"Just another figure of speech, my dear. Understand now, you're to keep mum for a while and I keep mum and we just sit back in our reserved seats up in the grand stand and see how the game comes out. A nice polite quiet game of watchful waiting--that's our line and we're both going to follow it. We'll stand by for future developments and then maybe I'll frame up a little campaign. With your valuable advice and assistance, of course!"

* * * * *

With a manner which she strove to make casual and unconcerned, the disturbed Mrs. Gatling that day watched. It was the manner rather of a solicitous hen with one lone chick, and she continually oppressed by dreads of some lurking chicken-hawk. It would have deceived no one who closely studied the lady's bearing and demeanor. But then, none in the party closely studied these.

The camp dunnage being miraculously bestowed upon the patient backs of various pack-animals, their expedition moved. They overtook and passed Dad Wheelis and his crew, caravanning with provender for the highway contractors on up under the cloud-combing parapet of the Garden Wall, and behind them heard for a while his frank and aboveboard reflections upon the immediate ancestries, the present deplorable traits, the darkened future prospects of his work stock. Soon they swung away from the rutted wagon track and took the steeper horseback trail and for hours threaded it like so many plodding ants against the slant of a tilted bowl. They stopped at midday on a little plateau fixed so high toward heaven that it was a picture-molding on Creation's wall above a vast mural of painted buttes and playful cataracts and a straggling timber-line and two jeweled glaciers.

They stretched their legs and uncramped their backs; they ate and remounted and on through the afternoon single-filed along the farther slope where a family herd of mountain-goats browsed among the stones and paid practically no heed to them. They saw a solitary bighorn ram with a twisted double cornucopia springing out of his skull and likewise they saw a pair of indifferent mule-deer and enough landscapes to fill all the souvenir post-card racks of the world; for complete particulars consult the official guide-book of Our National Playgrounds.

Evening brought them across a bony hip of the Divide to within sight of the distant rear boundary of the governmental domain. So they pitched the tents and coupled up the collapsible stove there in a sheltered small cove in the Park's back yard and watched the sun go down in his glory. When the moon rose it was too good to believe. You almost could reach up and jingle the tambourines of little circling stars; anyhow, you almost thought you could. It was a magic hour, an ideal place for lovemaking among the young of the species. Realizing the which, Mrs. Gating had a severe sinking and apprehensive sensation directly behind the harness buckle on the ample belt which girthed her weary form amidships. She'd been apprehensive all day but now the sinking was more pronounced.

She strained at the tethers of her patience though until supper was over and it was near hushabye-time for the tired forms of the middle-aged. Within the shelter of their small tent she spoke then to her husband, touching on the topic so steadfastly uppermost in her brain.

"Oh, Hector," she quavered, "I'm actually beginning to be afraid you're right. They've been together this livelong day. Neither one of them had eyes for anything or anybody else. The way he helped her on and off her horse! The way he fetched and carried for her! And the way she let him do it! And they're--they're together outside now. Oh, Hector!"

"They certainly are," he stated. "Sitting on a slab of rock in that infernal moonlight like a couple of feeble-minded turtledoves. Why in thunder couldn't it 'a' rained tonight--good and hard? Romola, I don't want to harry you up any more than's necessary but you take, say, about two or three more nights like this and they're liable to do considerable damage to tender hearts."

"Don't I know it? Oh-h, Hector!"

"Well, anyhow, I had the right angle on the situation before you tumbled," he said with a sort of melancholy satisfaction. "I can give myself credit for that much intelligence anyhow." It was quite plain that he did.

He stepped, a broad shape in his thick pajamas and quilted sleeping-boots, to the door flap and he drew the canvas back and peeped through the opening.

The pair under discussion had found the night air turning chill and

their perch hard. They got up and stood side by side in the shimmering white glow. Against a background of luminous blue-black space, it revealed their supple figures in strong, sharp relief. The youth made a handsome shadowgraph. His wide-brimmed sugar-loaf hat; his blue flannel blouse; his Angora chaps with wings that almost were voluminous enough for an eagle's wings; his red silk neckerchief reefed in by a carved bone ring to fit a throat which Mr. Gatling knew to be sun-tanned and wind-tanned to a healthy mahogany-brown; his beaded, deep-cuffed gauntlets; his sharp-toed, high-heeled, silver-roweled boots of a dude cowboy--they all matched and modeled in with the slender waist and the flat thighs and the sinewy broad shoulders and the alert head of the wearer.

His name was Hayes Tripler, but the other two guides generally called him "Slick" and they looked up to him, for he had ridden No Home, the man-killer, at last year's Pendleton Round-up and hoped this year to be in the bulldogging money over the line at Calgary.

Within his limitations he was an exceedingly competent person and given to deporting himself accordingly.

At this present moment he appeared especially well pleased with his own self-cast horoscope. There was a kind of proud proprietary aura all about him.

The watcher inside the tent saw a caressing arm slip from about his daughter's body and he caught the sounds but did not make out the sense of words that passed between them. Then the two silhouettes swung apart and the boy laughed contentedly and flung an arm aloft in a parting salute and began singing a catch as he went teetering off toward the spot where his mates of the outfit already were making the low tilt of a tarpaulin roof above them pulse to some very sincere snoring. But before she betook herself to quarters, the girl bided for a long minute on the verge of the cliff and looked off and away into the studded void beyond her.

Mr. Gatling drew the flaps together in an abstracted way and _mmphed_ several times.

"Pretty dog-gone spry-looking young geezer at that," he remarked absently.

"Who?"

"Him."

"You actually mean that cowboy?"

"None other than which."

"Oh, Hector! That--that vulgarian, that country bumpkin, that clodhopper!"

"Now hold on there, Romola. Let's try to be just even if we are prejudiced. All the clods that kid ever hopped you could put 'em in your eye without interfering with your eyesight. He's no farm-hand; he's a cow-hand or was before he got this job of steering tourists around through these mountains--and that's a very different thing, I take it. And what he knows he knows blame' well. I wish I could mingle in with a horse the way he does. When he gets in a saddle he's riveted there but I only come loose and work out of the socket. And I'd give about five years off my life to be able to handle a trout-rod like he can. I claim that in his departments he's a fairly high-grade proposition. He's aware of it, too, but I don't so much blame him for that, either. If you don't think well of yourself, who else is going to?"

"Why, Hector Gatling, I believe you're really--but no, you couldn't be! Look at the difference in their stations? Look at their different environments! Look at their different viewpoints!"

"I'm looking--just as hard as you are. You don't get what I'm driving at. I wouldn't fancy having this boy for a son-in-law any more than you would--although at that I'm not saying I couldn't maybe make some use of him in another capacity. Still, you needn't mind worrying so much about their respective stations in life. I didn't have any station in life to start from myself--it was a whistling-post. And yet I've managed to stagger along fairly well. I'd a heap rather see Shirley tied up to pretty near any decent, ambitious, self-respecting young cuss that came along than to have her fall for one of those plush-headed lounge-lizards that keep hanging round her back home. I know the breed. In my day they used to be guitar-pickers--and some of 'em played a snappy game of Kelly pool. Now they're Charleston dancers and the only place most of 'em carry any weight is on the hip.

"But that's not the point. The point is that if Shirley fell for this party she'd probably be a mighty regretful young female when the bloom began to rub off the peach. They haven't been raised to talk the same language--that's the trouble. I don't want her to make a mistake that'll gum up her life before it's fairly started. I don't want her to have a husband that she's liable later on to be

ashamed to show him off before the majority of her friends, or anyhow one that she'd maybe have to go around making excuses for the way he handled his knife and fork in company; or something. Right now, the fix she's in, she's probably saying to herself that she could be perfectly satisfied to settle down in a cabin somewhere out here and wet-nurse a lot of calves for the next thirty, forty or fifty years. But that's only her heart talking, not her head. After a while she'd get to brooding on Palm Beach and Paris."

"But if she's set her mind--and you know how stubborn she is when she gets her mind set--thank heavens she didn't get that from my side of the family!--I say, if she's set her mind on him, heavens above only knows what's going to happen. She's bewitched, she's hypnotized; it's this free and easy Western life that's fascinated her. I can't believe she's in love with him!"

"Well, I don't know. Maybe she's in love with a half-gallon hat and a pair of cowboy pants with silver dewdabs down the sides, or then again on the other hand maybe it's the real thing with her, or a close imitation of it. That's for us to find out if we can."

"I won't believe it. She's distracted, she's glamourised, she's----"

"All right, then, let's get her unglammed."

"But how?"

"Well, for one thing, by not rushing in and interfering with her little dream. By not letting either one of 'em see how anxious we are over this thing. By remaining as calm, cool and collected as we can."

"And in the meanwhile?"

"Well, in the meanwhile I, for one, am going to tear off a few winks. I hurt all over and there's quite a lot of me measured that way--all over."

"You can go to sleep with that--that dreadful thought hanging over us?"

"I can and I will. Watch me for about another minute and you'll hear me doing it." He settled himself on his air mattress and drew the blankets over him.

Undeniably Mr. Hector Gatling could be one of the most aggravating

persons on earth when he set out to be. Any husband can.

* * * * *

Speaking with regard to the ripening effect of summer nights upon the spirits of receptive and impressionable youth, Mr. Gatling had listed the cumulative possibilities of three moonlit ones hand-running. Specifically he had not included in his perilous category those languishing soft gloamings and those explosive sunrises and those long lazy mornings when the sun baked resinous perfumes out of the cedars and the unseen heart-broken little bird that the mountaineers call the lonesome bird sang his shy lament in the thickets; nor had he mentioned slow journeys through deep defiles where ferns grew with a tropical luxuriance; nor yet the fordings of tumbling streams when it might seem expedient on the part of a thoughtful young man to steady a young equestrian of the opposite sex while her horse's hoofs fumbled over the slick, drowned boulders. But vaguely he had lumped all these contingencies in his symposium of contributory dangers.

Three more nights of moon it was with three noble days of pleasant adventuring in between; and on the late afternoon of the third day when camp was being made beside a river which mostly was rapids, Miss Shirley Gatling sought out her father in a secluded spot somewhat apart from the rest. It was in the nature of a rendezvous, she having told him a little earlier that presently she desired to have speech with him. Only, her way of putting it had been different.

"Harken, O most revered Drawing Account," she said, dropping back on a broad place in the trail to be near him. "If you can spare the time from being saddle-sore I want to give you an earful as soon as this procession, as of even date, breaks up. You pick a quiet retreat away from the flock and wait there until I find you, savvy?"

So now he was waiting, and from yonder she came toward him stepping lightly, swinging forward from her hips with a sort of impudent freedom of movement; and to his father's eyes she never had seemed more graceful or more delectable or more independent looking.

"Dad," she began, without preamble, and meeting him eye to eye, "in me you behold a Sabine woman. I'm bespoken."

"Mmph," he answered, and the answer might be interpreted, by a person who knew him, in any one of half a dozen ways.

"Such is the case," she went on, quite unafraid. "That caveman over there in the blue shirt"--she pointed--"he's the nominee. We're engaged."

"I can't plead surprise, kid," he stated, taking on for the moment her bantering tone. "The report that you two had come to a sort of understanding has been in active circulation on this reservation for the past forty-eight hours or so--maybe longer."

Her eyebrows went up. "I don't get you," she said. "Who circulated it?"

"You did, for one," he told her. "And he did, for another. I may be failing, what with increasing age and all, but I'm not more than half blind yet. Have you been to your mother with this piece of news?"

"I came to you first. I--I"--for the first time she faltered an instant--"I figured you might be able to get the correct slant a little quicker than she would. This is only the curtain-raiser. I'm saving the big scene with the melodramatic touches for her. I have a feeling that she may be just a trifle difficult. So I picked on something easy to begin with."

"I see," he said. "Kind of an undress rehearsal, eh?" He held her off at arm's length from him, studying her face hungrily. "But what's the reason your young man didn't come along with you or ahead of you, in fact? In my time it generally was the young man that brought the message to Garcia."

"He wanted to come--he wasn't scared. I wouldn't let him. I told him I'd been knowing you longer than he had and I could handle the job better by myself. Well, that's your cue. What's it going to be, daddy--the glad hand of approval and the parental bless you my children, bless you, or a little line of that go-forth-ungrateful-hussy-and-never-darken-my-doors-again stuff? Only, we're a trifle shy on doors around here."

He drew her to him and spoke downward at the top of her cropped head, she snuggling her face against his wool-clad breast.

"Baby," he said, "when all's said and done, the whole thing's up to you, way I look at it. I don't suppose there ever was a man who really loved his daughter but what he figured that, taking one thing with another, she was too good for any man on earth. I'm not saying now what sort of a husband I'd try to pick out for you if the choice

had been left to me. I'd probably want to keep you an old maid so's I could have you around and then I'd secretly despise myself for doing it, too. What I'm saying is this: If you're certain you know your own mind and if you've decided that this boy is the boy you want, why what more is there for me to do except maybe to ask you just one or two small questions?"

"Shoot!" she bade, without looking up, but her arms hugged him a little tighter. "Probably one of the nicest old meal-tickets in the world," she added, confidentially addressing the top buttonhole of his sweater.

"Has it by any chance entered into your calculations at this early stage of the game, how you are going to live--you two? Or where? Or, if I may be so bold, what on?"

"That's easy," she said, and now she was peering up at him through a tousled short forelock. "You're going to set us up on a place out here somewhere--a ranch. We're going to raise beef. He knows about beef. And I'm going to learn. I aim to be the leading lady beefer of the Imperial Northwest."

"Whose notion was that?" His voice had sharpened the least bit.

"Mine, of course. He doesn't know anything about it. His idea is that we start in on what he can earn. But my idea is that we start in on a few of the simoleons that have already been earned--by you. And that's the idea that's going to prevail."

"Lucky I brought a fountain pen and a check-book along," he said. "Nothing like being prepared for these sudden emergencies. Still, I take it there's no great rush. Now, I tell you what: You run along and locate your mother and get that over with. She knows how I stand--we've been discussing this little affair our own selves."

"Oh," she said. "Oh, you have?" She seemed disappointed somehow--disappointed and slightly puzzled.

"Oh yes, several times. And on your way kindly whisper to the young man that I'm lurking right here behind these rocks ready to have a few words with him."

"Righto!" She reached up and kissed him and went swinging away, and for just a moment Mr. Gatling's conscience smote him.

"I've got to do it," he said to himself, excusing himself. "I've

just got to find out--for her sake and ours--yes, and for his, too. It looks like an impossible bet and I've got to make sure."

* * * * *

With young Tripier he had more than the few words he had specified. They had quite an interview and as they had it the youth's embarrassment, which at the outset of the dialog had made him wriggle and mumble and kick with his toes at inoffensive pebbles, gradually wore off until it vanished altogether and his native assurance reasserted itself. A proposition was advanced. It needed little pressing; promptly he fell in with it. It appealed to him.

"So we're agreed there," concluded his prospective father-in-law, clinching the final rivets. "We'll all go right ahead and finish out this tour--it's only a couple of days more anyhow. Then I'll take Shirley and her mother and run on out to Spokane. We'll hustle one of the other boys back tomorrow to the entrance to tell my chauffeur to load some bags in the car and run around to this side and meet us where we come out. We'll leave you there and you can dust back to the starting point through that short cut over the Garden Wall you were just speaking of. The business that I've got in Spokane will keep me maybe two or three days. That'll give you time to get those new clothes of yours and then we'll all meet over at Many Glacier--I'll wire you in advance--and in a day or two we'll all go on East together so's you can get acquainted with Shirley's friends and so forth. But of course, as I said before, that's our secret--all that part of it is. You've never been East, I believe?"

"Well, I've been as far as Minot, North Dakota."

"You'll probably notice a good deal of territory the other side of there. You'll enjoy it. Sure you can pick up all the wardrobe you need out in this country?" His manner was solicitous.

"Oh yes, sir, there's those two swell fellows named Steinfeld and Immergluck I was telling you about that they've got the leading gents' furnishing goods store down in Cree City."

"Good enough! I'd suggest that when picking out a suit you get something good and brisk as to pattern. Shirley likes live colors." Mr. Gatling next stressed a point which already had been dwelt upon: "You understand of course that she's not to know a single thing about all this--it's strictly between us two?"

"Yes, sir."

"You see, that'll make the surprise all the greater when she sees you all fixed up in a snappy up-to-date rigging like young college fellows your age wear back where she comes from. Seems like to me I was reading in an advertisement only here the other day where they're going in for coats with belts on 'em this season. Oh yes, and full-bottomed pants; I read that, too.

"One thing more occurs to me: Your hair is a little bit long and shaggy, don't you think? That's fine for out here but back East a young fellow that wants to be in style keeps himself trimmed up sort of close. Now I saw a barber working on somebody about as old as you are just the other day. Let me see--where was it? Oh yes, it was the barber at that town of Cree City--I dropped in there for a shave when we motored down last week. He seemed to have pretty good ideas about trimming up a fellow's bean, that barber."

"I know the one you mean--Silk Sullivan. I've patronized him before."

"That's the one. Well, patronize him again before you rejoin us. He knows his business all right, your friend Sullivan does.... Now, mind you, mum's the word. All this part of it is absolutely between us."

"Oh yes, sir."

"O. k. Shake on it.... Well, suppose we see how they're coming along with supper."

* * * * *

Mr. Gatling's strategy ticked like a clock. After they got to Spokane he delayed the return by pretending a vexatious prolongation of a purely fictitious deal in ore properties, his privy intent being to give opportunity for Cree City's ready-made clothing princes to work their will. Since a hellish deed must be done he craved that they do it properly. Then on the homeward journey when they had reached the Western Gate, he suddenly remembered he had failed to complete his purchases of an assortment of game heads at Lewis's on Lake McDonald. He professed that he couldn't round out the order by telephone; unless he personally checked his collection some grievous error might be made.

"You go on across on this train, Shirley," he said. "I telegraphed your young man that we'd be there this morning and he'll be on the

lookout. Your mother and I'll dust up to the head of the lake on the bus and I'll finish up what I've got to do there and we'll be along on the Limited this evening. After being separated for a whole week you two'll enjoy a day together without any old folks snooping around. Meet us at the hotel tonight."

So Shirley went on ahead. It perhaps was true that Shirley's nerves had suffered after six days spent in the companionship of a devoted mother who trailed along with yearning, grief-stricken eyes fixed on her only child--a mother who at frequent intervals sniffed mournfully. Quite willingly Shirley went.

"I--I feel as though I were giving her up forever," faltered Mrs. Gatling, following with brimming eyes her daughter's departing form.

"Romola," commanded Mr. Gatling, "don't be foolish in the head. You're going to be separated from her exactly nine hours."

"But she tripped away so gaily--so gladly. It was exactly as though she wanted to leave us. And yet, heavens knows I've tried and tried ever since that--that terrible night to show her what she means to me----"

"You've done more than try, Romola--you've succeeded, if that's any consolation to you. You've succeeded darned well." He stared almost regretfully down the line at the rear of an observation-car swiftly diminishing into a small square dot where the rails came together. "Since you mention it, she did look powerfully chipper and cheerful a minute ago, hustling to climb aboard that Pullman--cheerfuller than she's looked since we quit the trail last Wednesday. Lord, how I wish I could guarantee that kid was never going to have a minute's unhappiness the rest of her life!" Something remotely akin to remorse was beginning to gnaw at Mr. Gatling's heart cockles.

* * * * *

Indeed, something strongly resembling remorse beset him toward the close of this day. At the station when they detrained, no Shirley was on hand to greet them; nor was there sign of Shirley's affianced, either. Up the slope from the tracks at the hotel a clerk wrenched himself from an importuning cluster of newly-arrived tourists for long enough to tell them Miss Gatling had left word she would be awaiting them in their rooms and wished them to come up immediately.

So they went up under escort of two college students serving as

bell-hops. A bedroom door opened and out came Shirley--a crumpled, wobegone Shirley with a streaky swollen face.

"It's all right, mater," she said with a flickering trace of her usual jauntiness. "The alliance between the house of Gatling and the house of Tripier is off. So you can liven up. I'll be your substitute for such crying as is done in this family during the next day or two. I've--I've been practising all afternoon."

She eluded the lady's outstretched arms and clung temporarily at her father's breast.

"Dad," she confessed brokenly, "I think I must have been a little bit loony these last two weeks. But, dad, I've taken the cure. It's not nice medicine and it makes you feel miserable at first but I guess it's good for what ails me.... Dad, have you seen--him?"

"Not yet." Compassion for her was mixed in with his own secret exultation, as though he tasted a sweet cake that was iced with a most bitter icing.

"Well, when you do, you'll understand. Even if he doesn't!"

"Have you told him?"

"Of course I have. Did you think I'd try to wish that little job off on you? I didn't tell him the real reason--I couldn't wound him that much. I told him I'd changed. But he--he's really the one that's changed. That's what makes it harder for me now. That's what makes it hurt so."

"Here, Romola," he said, kissing the girl and relinquishing her into her mother's grasp. "You swap tears awhile--you'll enjoy that anyhow, Romola. I've got business downstairs--got to make some sleeper reservations for getting out of here in the morning. And as soon as we hit Pittsburgh I figure you two had better be booking up for a little swing around Europe."

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The lobby below was seething--seething is the word commonly used in this connection so we might as well do so, too--was seething with Easterners who mainly had dressed as they imagined Westerners would dress, and with Westerners who mainly had dressed as they imagined Easterners would dress, the resultant effect being that nobody was fooled but everybody was pleased. Working his way through the jam on

the search for a certain one, Mr. Gatling's eye almost immediately was caught by a startling color combination or rather a series of startling color combinations appertaining to an individual who stood half hidden by a column, leaning against it, head down, with his back to Mr. Gatling.

To begin at the top, there was, surmounting all, a smug undersized object of head-gear--at least, it would pass for head-gear--of a poisonous mustard shade. It perched high and, as it were, aloof upon the crest of its wearer's skull. Below it, where the neck had been shaved, and a good portion of the close-clipped scalp as well, showed a sort of crescent of pink skin blazing forth in strong contrast to the abnormally long expanse of sunburnt surface rising above the cross-line of an exceedingly low, exceedingly shiny pink linen collar.

Straying on downward, Mr. Gatling's wondering eye was aware of a high-waisted Norfolk jacket belted well up beneath the armpits, a garment of a tone which might not be called mauve nor yet lavender nor yet magenta but which partook subtly of all three shades--with a plaid overlay in chocolate superimposed thereon. Yet nearer the floor was revealed a pair of trousers extensively bell-bottomed and apparently designed with the intent to bring out and impress upon the casual observer the fact that their present owner had two of the most widely bowed legs on the North American continent; and finally, a brace of cloth-top shoes. Tan shoes, these were, with buttoned uppers of a pale fawn cloth, and bulldog toes. They were very new shoes, that was plain, and of an exceedingly bright and pristine glossiness.

This striking person now moved out of his shelter, his shoulders being set at a despondent hunch, and as he turned about, bringing his profile into view, Mr. Gatling recognized that the stranger was no stranger and he gasped.

"Perfect!" he muttered to himself; "absolutely perfect! Couldn't be better if I'd done it myself. And, oh Lordy, that necktie--that's the finishing stroke! Still, at that, it's a rotten shame--the poor kid!"

He hurried across, overtaking the slumped figure, and as his hand fell in a friendly slap upon one drooped shoulder the transformed cowboy looked about him with two sad eyes.

"Howdy-do, sir," he said wanly. Then he braced himself and squared his back, and Mr. Gatling perceived--and was glad to note--that the

youngster strove to take his heartache in a manly fashion.

"Son," said Mr. Gatling, "from what I'm able to gather I'm not going to have you for a son-in-law after all. But that's no reason why we shouldn't hook up along another line. I've been watching you off and on ever since we got acquainted and more closely since--well, since about a week ago, and it strikes me you've got some pretty good stuff in you. I've been thinking of trying a little flier in the cattle game out here. If you think you'd like a chance to start in as foreman or boss or superintendent or whatever you call it and maybe work up into a partnership if you showed me you had the goods, why, we'll talk it over together at dinner. The womenfolks won't be down and we can sit and powwow."

"I'd like that fine, sir," said young Tripier.

"Good boy! I'll keep you so busy you won't have time to brood on any little disappointment that you may be suffering from now.... Say, son, don't mind my suggesting something, do you? If I was you I'd climb out of these duds you've got on and climb back into your regular working clothes--you don't seem to match the picture the way you are now."

"Why, you advised me to get 'em your own self, sir!" exclaimed the youth.

"That's right, I did, didn't I? Well, maybe you had better keep on wearing 'em." A shrewd and crafty gleam flickered under his eyelids. "You see--yes--on second thoughts, I think I want a chance to get used to you in your stylish new outfit. Promise me you'll wear 'em until noon tomorrow anyhow?"

"Yes, sir," said his victim obediently.

Mr. Gatling winked a concealed, deadly wink.

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A KEEPER OF TRADITION

by Don Marquis

from *Scribners* - August, 1927

YOU could probably be sent to prison for life
for what you've just done, in your careless
fashion, and if it wasn't so hard to get wait-

ers, I'd see as that happened to you. Not that you're really a waiter, or ever will be a waiter. When I'm dead, and one other man in this club, and five or six more in New York City, there won't be a waiter, as should be called a waiter, left in this here hemisphere. You bloody well ought to have your neck broke'for what you just done—desecrating the shrine, so to speak, of the two greatest artists of any kind this country ever saw. Maybe I won't tell on you, and maybe I will tell on you; and maybe nobody will ever need to tell on you—maybe Fate will just take charge of you for what you've done, and curl you up into a horrible and poisonous ending, as will be a warning to a lot of brash young bolsheviks that call themselves waiters these days."

It was a sunny spring morning, and I was sitting on the back veranda of The Painters Club in New York City, eating a very late breakfast, when I heard this tirade uttered in a low, intense voice. Every one else had had his breakfast; it was too early for lunch; I was alone on the veranda. I moved my chair without noise, and peeped into the dining-room through the open window. The Oldest Waiter and the Youngest Waiter were polishing silverware at a serving-table just within the window. Horror was stamped upon the stern aquiline visage of the Oldest Waiter, as he looked alternately at a silver platter in his hands, and at the Youngest Waiter. And the face of the Youngest Waiter—a pimply, anemic youth, whom I recognized as having been recently promoted from the position of hat-check boy—was a mask of terror.

"What I done that's so awful, John?" quavered the Youngest Waiter.

"Mr. Watson, please," said John.

“What you have done, Herbert, is almost inexpressible; and if it was to be found out on you, you’d never leave this club alive. You’d leave here in sections, in the trash-cans, and no questions asked, and no satisfaction given to any family of yours that might inquire. And the city gover’nment and the Supreme Court of the United States would back the club up in not answering questions, for this club ain’t any ordinary club, Herbert. You got to be in this club eight or ten years, either as a servant or a member, before you realize the influence this club has got, through its employees and members, on the fate of this country.”

“But what have I done, Mr. Watson, please?” trembled Herbert, a gentle dew breaking out on his pallid features.

“I can’t tell you what you’ve done so you would understand how terrible it is,” said Old Watson, “without I tell you the true story of how this club got started. And you ain’t got the intelligence ever to understand what this club stands for. But what you’ve done is a good deal worse than if you was to go down to Mt. Vernon on the Fourth of July and insult the tomb of George Washington. But I’ll try and give you an idea so that, if what you done to-day don’t get found out on you, and you don’t suddenly disappear off the face of the earth, you will know how to conduct yourself around here in the future, and who to look to for guidance and instructions.”

I settled myself, out of sight behind the angle of the window, to listen; and the Oldest Waiter continued:

The man who founded this club was the greatest oil-painter that ever lived, bar none, and it has been recognized and

proved time and again. Put one of his paintings alongside one of Michael Angelo's or Rembrandt's, whether it is a human painting, or an ocean painting, or landscape with sheep in it, and all rivals pale and fade into insignificance. And as far as Whistler's Mother is concerned, when put beside his painting of his own Mother, she becomes just merely an old lady, and nothing more.

His painting of himself, in the library up-stairs, is the greatest painting of any kind ever painted in the world. The next time you are in that room just notice how the eyes follow you about, wherever you stand, and you will see what I mean. That painting in the library being the greatest painting of the greatest painter that ever lived, done by himself in the studio at the top of this very building, is priceless. This club has been offered untold sums of money for it, up toward a million dollars; but we wouldn't sell it for all the money in the world, and people come from all over the world just to get one look at it, and worship it. And the last Ladies Day here, there was a young woman who was a painter herself come into the club, and got one look at it, and expired ; for it had been a lifelong ambition of hers just to look at it, and the excitement was too much for her. We carried her out through the kitchen, and got her into a cab, and her death was kept from the papers, for nothing as transpires in this club ever gets into any newspaper.

Young Herbert, what you have done to-day is worse, far worse, than if you was to take that world-famous painting out of its frame and burn it, in the face of all the membership of the club. And if it was to get out on you, even I could not save you from your fate, as much influence as I have got around these precincts.

This here great painter, I hope I don't need to tell you, was Mr. Henry Arlington, and there was five whole years of his life he would never have any hand but mine touch his Welsh rabbits.

"Cooks may come and cooks may go," he used often to say, "but John here is the greatest artist the world has ever known in making a Welsh rabbit."

And I never said to him that one great artist always recognizes another. For I know what is due, from me and to me, too well to ever get familiar with a member; or encourage one to get familiar with me, but nevertheless that is the truth, as you will know, Young Herbert, if you should be allowed to remain in this club, and hearken to the old employees.

Well, Mr. Arlington, he started painting young, and he kept at it hard, and when he was forty years old he was getting incredulous amounts of money every time he put his brush to the canvas. And all the world was worshipping at his feet, and kings and queens, and princes of Wales and other places, when they would come to this country incognito, would crave permission to have their pictures painted. And if his engagements was such as he couldn't receive them personal, he would say they could send him a photograph, and he would dash off something from that for a memento for them.

And when he was about forty, and had no more worlds to conquer, he says to himself he will found the most exclusive club in the world, where painters can meet up with other artists, such as writers and sculptors and architects and actors and playwrights, and a sprinkling of very wealthy gentlemen who would be patrons

of the arts and interested in purchasing art works. And now and then he would let in a President of the United States, or a senator even, if he was truly a gentleman and not merely a politician, and once I think there was a mayor of New York got in as a member. But he never come here but once or twice, for he saw at a glance he was outclassed, and didn't feel comfortable. Well, Young Herbert, this is perhaps the most exclusive club that the world has ever seen that you have desecrated down to its foundation-stones to-day; and I don't know how you got in here, even as a hat-check boy; but times ain't what they was thirty years ago, among either servants or members. All the same, if I ever was to hear you or any other young waiter takin' advantage of the laxness of the times, and repeatin' any of the remarks you may hear from new members down in the billiard-room on certain wet evenings, out you would go.

For the difference between a servant and a member is that the latter may forget himself at rare intervals and tell a yarn that wouldn't wash in a drawing-room, but a servant has got to be an example always.

Mr. Arlington, after he founded the club, lived in the top story, and had his studio there, and it was often my privilege to wait upon him. But the one who was his favorite servant was James Wilson; and outside of Mr. Arlington himself, the greatest man in the world, and the most gentlemanly gentleman, was James Wilson, and James Wilson, Young Herbert, was the best servant this club or any other club has ever seen, for a good servant in a club like this has to start with being a gentleman, and if he ain't it will bloody well show up on him sooner or later and he will be consigned to outer darkness.

James Wilson had the most remarkable life of any man that was ever known; even, in some ways, as remarkable as Mr. Arlington's himself. He come into the club when it was founded, and he wasn't no more than eighteen years old, which I take to be about your age now, Young Herbert, to judge from your pimples and your not having any sense or any background. And whether you'll ever survive to see nineteen or not, depends on whether I'll take pity on you for what you done to-day, and, in a measure, on how you conduct yourself to me personal.

James Wilson, at eighteen, was as quiet and respectable and gentlemanly as if he'd been born a servant; and he knew his place too well ever to let it be seen by one of the members that he was, himself, full of the makings of a great artist. But when he got to waiting on Mr. Arlington almost exclusive, it begun to come out, little by little, amongst an inner circle of us servants and members, that James Wilson had been imbibing art from his surroundings here. Four or five of us knew it, and we said nothing. It was getting into James Wilson through the pores of his skin, as you might say; and the only question was whether it would take the turn of his being a great painter, or a great actor, or a great writer, or a great sculptor. For something gets into the pores in this club, if you stay here long enough—which you, probably, will not, Young Herbert, unless I get one of my good-natured streaks and don't report you. There probably ain't an old employee in this club that don't know more about the arts, through imbibing the talk through his pores, than almost any other collection of human beings in the world. But with most of them, it makes critics of them. That is the turn it has taken with me. I

could not rhyme poetry together, like some of the members, and I could not paint oil-paintings any better than these cubists, and I could not architect, but I am a critic. With Old Gaffney, the superintendent, what it has turned into is making him just like a patron of the arts; and since Mr. Arlington and James Wilson passed away there is no more cultured gentleman in the world than Old Gaffney.

Well, by the time he was twenty-five, James Wilson had become head waiter, and at twenty-seven he was superintendent; and Mr. Arlington and me, and two or three others of the charter members and charter servants, knew secretly that his art had now taken a final turn, and he was secretly a great painter, second in all the world only to Mr. Arlington himself. And more and more he was the personal servant of Mr. Arlington, and more and more he was the gentleman. You couldn't look at Mr. Arlington and James Wilson without realizing how much difference there was between ordinary men and them two.

Only Mr. Arlington, as president of the club, and an artist, had his moments when he was a Bohemian, too. But James Wilson, whilst he was a servant, never permitted himself to be a Bohemian.

One day Old Gaffney, who was Young Gaffney then, says to me: " Mr. Watson, I heard a remarkable conversation this morning."

"What was it, Mr. Gaffney?" I says to him.

"It was between our president and Mr. Wilson," he says. "Mr. Arlington says to him: ' James, you show more promise than any young painter I have ever known.

The amount of work you have done on my recent canvases is something that would startle the public, if they knew of it. Why don't you resign as a servant, and join the club as a member?'

"*Mr. Henry,' says Mr. Wilson, 'I wouldn't consider it quite respectful to you, sir.'

Gaffney told me that Mr. Arlington pooh-poohed this, and coaxed James Wilson, but James Wilson was firm. He said that if he ever became a painter, publicly, it would have to be under an assumed name; and it would be also under an assumed name that he would join the club. He had too much respect for the club and the gentlemen in it, ever to come in under the name as he had been a servant under. Well, it was three or four years after this that Mr. Henry Arlington made that fatal trip to the South Sea Islands, and was reputed to be lost forever, and was never heard of but once again here nor anywheres else.

James Wilson lingered on at the club for several years after Mr. Arlington disappeared, and the club was getting older then, and it was James Wilson, as superintendent, who established the traditions of it almost as much as the memory of Henry Arlington, the founder and first president. For it ain't like any other club, Young Herbert. All us older servants and older members has always kept those traditions alive, and sometimes it has been bloody hard work for us, too, what with younger members coming in as has no background to speak of socially, though competent in the arts, and what with you dam bolsheviks as is sent us to train from the employment agencies.

It was about five years after Mr. Ar-

lington disappeared that James Wilson suddenly left, and Old Gaffney became superintendent, and has been ever since. And it come, I always thought, through Gaffney imbibing the ideas of a patron of the arts; whereas I would naturally have been superintendent myself now, instead of head waiter, if I had imbibed those ideas instead of becoming a critic. Well, the Board of Governors is the Board of Governors, and no human being in this world can kick against what they decide on, but there has been times when the rest of us was bloody well disgusted with Old Gaffney as superintendent. But if I ever hear you speak disrespectful of him, or to him, Young Herbert, my lips will unseal themselves about the crime you committed to-day.

It was about a year after James Wilson left that all us people at the art-centre of the country, which is right here, Young Herbert, begun to hear about a new painter who called himself Mr. Arlen Henderton; and we went to view his exhibitions, and we all says to each other that he has got to be a member of The Painters Club. For it was nothing short of genius that he showed. I says myself, one evening late, when I was serving a Welsh rabbit to Mr. De Casanova, the great art critic:

“I beg your pardon, Mr. De Casanova, but is it true, as I overheard some gentlemen saying at dinner to-night, that Mr. Arlen Henderton’s work has the same wonderful touch as the late Mr. Henry Arlington’s work ?”

“It is true, John,” says Mr. De Casanova.

Well, I hadn’t heard any one say so; I had seen it in the work myself; but I

wouldn't take the liberty to say so to a member. Nevertheless, I was glad Mr. De Casanova agreed with me.

It was only a year later that Mr. Arlen Henderton joined the club—and, as you would have guessed, Young Herbert, if you wasn't a born idiot, he was no less a person really than James Wilson. In his modest gentlemanly way he had thought it would be a tribute to our first president, the man from whom he had imbibed his painting, to take as near his name as he could on joining our club . . . being also, as he had said previously, determined not to join with his name as a servant. And I will say this for the gentlemanliness of this club, that neither member nor servant ever so far forgot himself as to call him James Wilson until a certain great day came when he himself requested that he be called that once more.

In a way of speaking, Mr. Arlen Henderton took the whole world by storm with his art, and he became more and more popular around the club; and now he permitted himself to be quite a little Bohemian at times, but never any more Bohemian than Mr. Arlington had been. And in five years more he had become the president of the club. And the day he was elected, he made a little talk to the club, and he says:

"Gentlemen, many of you have known for some years that my real name is James Wilson, and that I started in life as a hat-check boy in this club, of which to-day I become the president; and you have kept the secret well, as was to have been expected of you. You know my motives for concealing my real name. But last night it suddenly occurred to me that my modesty might be misconstrued as snobbishness, and I said to myself: 'If I am elected

president to-morrow I will return to the real name under which my fellow members knew me as a servant.' I think, gentlemen, that Mr. Arlington himself would like it."

Well, the members liked it, anyhow; and they cheered, and some was seen to wipe away a tear; and one or two of us old servants well-nigh forgot ourselves—but not quite, Young Herbert, not quite.

And the next fifteen years after that James Wilson was president of this club, and they were the halligan days. Often us old servants and old members think back upon that time, and sigh and say to ourselves: 'Yes, those were the halligan days.' More and more traditions of culturedness and arts and letters and background and Bohemianism and gentlemanliness was built up around here in those days, Young Herbert, than a dam bolshevik like you could bloody well comprehend in a million years, and that might well apply to some of the new members, too. After all, it's us old servants that eases the new members into conformity with the customs and traditions; there's some of us in every room all the time, a pattern and a model to them of what they should be.

And then, one night, twelve years ago last Christmas Eve it was, there happened one of the most remarkable things even this club has ever seen. And it's a secret to the world yet; there was twenty newspaper editors present, but it never got into any paper; and if you was to breathe one word of it, inside this club or outside, it would get back to me within twenty-four hours, and you would never even be heard of again, Young Herbert. You never have seen a Christmas Eve in this club—and it ain't likely you ever will see

one, for you may be in prison, if not in the electric chair, before next Christmas, for the sacrilege and bolshevism you have performed here to-day. Christmas Eve is our big night here; for it was on Christmas Eve that Mr. Arlington turned over the club to the members. There's always a big dinner, with the president and the Board of Governors at the head of the long table there, and there's always a ceremony, which I will not desecrate by describing to a bloody little guttersnipe like you, but which you may live to witness yourself if you manage to make your peace with me.

This night we was short of waiters, and an old fellow we had picked off the streets a couple of weeks before, and used as a scullion, was drafted in at the last minute to help at the big dinner, first having been taken and trimmed up as to his hair and beard, and stuck into a proper shirt and suit. He was a bent old gray-haired fellow, who never said anything to anybody, and quiet and gentle, with misty blue eyes and a mind that seemingly wandered, but Gaffney had to take a chance on him.

Well, the whole club stood by their chairs, ready to sit down, as soon as president James Wilson and the Board of Governors took their seats, and all of a sudden this old scullion steps up to the head of the table, and looks around the dining-room with a queer look on his face.

"Gentlemen," he says, "I am glad to be with you once again."

And then he sits down in the president's chair.

You could have heard a pin drop, but before any one could say or do anything, or even breathe, he turns and says to the

president of the club, James Wilson, sort of gentle and smiling and reproachful:

“James! James! This isn’t my tankard!”

For every Christmas Eve things always started off by a toast, which every one drunk from his own pewter mug.

The president of the club, something come over him; and he turned without a word to the place on the wall where Mr. Henry Arlington’s tankard always hung, like something sacred, and he reached it down, and filled it with ale, and handed it to the old man.

The old man raised it, and then full human understanding came over him like a flood, and it was too much for him—he raised himself up, and he gave a wild look around the room, and then he clutched at himself and fell dead. And James Wilson took the liberty of falling dead across him.

How Mr. Henry Arlington came not to be lost in that shipwreck we never knew; nor how many years he spent on some terrible island, nor how long he wandered crazy around the world before he came back to be a scullion here where he had been president. But when we cremated the body we saw he was tattooed all over.

And his ashes and James Wilson’s ashes was put in that urn over the fireplace, and have been there all but worshipped through all the years since. And the next time I say to you to go to the fireplace and get me some ashes to help clean the silverware, go to the fire part of the fireplace, and not the mantelpiece. For you could be bloody well executed for what you have done to-day. Now, then, fill the

urn up again with wood ashes, and set it on the mantelpiece, and maybe I won't say anything. But you better remember, Young Herbert, who it was that saved you from a fate worse than death; and the next time you come onto a pint of liquor in the locker-room, where it's got no legal right to be, you bring it to me to dispose of legal; don't you take it to Old Gaffney.

Ten minutes later I said to the Oldest Waiter: "John! It seems to me you have been embroidering a little, to call it that, on the history and traditions of the club."

"You heard me talking to Young Herbert?" inquired John, with a grin and a wink. "Well, you know, sir, you've got to impress these young bolsheviks some way, right from the start!"

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CONSIDER THE COMMUTER

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Plum Pudding*, by Christopher Morley

When they tell us the world is getting worse and worse, and the follies and peevishness of men will soon bring us all to some damnable perdition, we are consoled by contemplating the steadfast virtue of commuters. The planet grows harder and harder to live on, it is true; every new invention makes things more complicated and perplexing. These new automatic telephones, which are said to make the business of getting a number so easy, will mean (we suppose) that we will be called up fifty times a day--instead of (as now) a mere twenty or thirty, while we are swooning and swinking over a sonnet. But more and more people are taking to commuting and we look to that to save things.

Because commuting is a tough and gruelling discipline. It educes all the latent strength and virtue in a man (although it is hard on those at home, for when he wins back at supper time there is left in him very little of what the ladies so quaintly call "soul"). If you

study the demeanour of fellow-passengers on the 8:04 and the 5:27 you will see a quiet and well-drilled acceptiveness, a pious non-resistance, which is not unworthy of the antique Chinese sages.

Is there any ritual (we cry, warming to our theme) so apt to imbue the spirit with patience, stolidity, endurance, all the ripe and seasoned qualities of manhood? It is well known that the fiercest and most terrible fighters in the late war were those who had been commuters. It was a Division composed chiefly of commuters that stormed the Hindenburg Stellung and purged the Argonne thickets with flame and steel. Their commanding officers were wont to remark these men's carelessness of life. It seemed as though they hardly heeded whether they got home again or not.

See them as they stand mobbed at the train gate, waiting for admission to the homeward cars. A certain disingenuous casualness appears on those hardened brows; but beneath burn stubborn fires. These are engaged in battle, and they know it--a battle that never ends. And while a warfare that goes on without truce necessarily develops its own jokes, informalities, callousnesses, disregard of wounds and gruesome sights, yet deep in their souls the units never forget that they are drilled and regimented for struggle. We stood the other evening with a Freeport man in the baggage compartment at the front of a train leaving Brooklyn. We two had gained the bull's-eye window at the nose of the train and sombrely watched the sparkling panorama of lights along the track. Something had gone wrong with the schedule that evening, and the passengers of the 5:27 had been shunted to the 5:30. As fellow mariners will, we discussed famous breakdowns of old and the uncertainties of the commuter's life. "Yes," said our companion, "once you leave home you never know when you'll get back." And he smiled the passive, placable smile of the experienced commuter.

It is this reasonable and moderate temper that makes the commuter the seed wherewith a new generation shall be disseminated. He faces troubles manifold without embittered grumbling. His is a new kind of Puritanism, which endures hardship without dourness. When, on Christmas Eve, the train out of Jamaica was so packed that the aisle was one long mass of unwillingly embraced passengers, and even the car platforms were crowded with shivering wights, and the conductor buffeted his way as best he could over our toes and our parcels of tinsel balls, what was the general cry? Was it a yell against the railroad for not adding an extra brace of cars? No, it was good-natured banter of the perspiring little officer as he struggled to disentangle himself from forests of wedged legs. "You've got a fine, big family in here," they told him: "you ought to be proud of

us." And there was a sorrowing Italian who had with him a string of seven children who had tunnelled and burrowed their way down the packed aisle of the smoking car and had got irretrievably scattered. The father was distracted. Here and there, down the length of the car, someone would discover an urchin and hold him up for inspection. "Is this one of them?" he would cry, and Italy would give assent. "Right!" And the children were agglomerated and piled in a heap in the middle of the car until such time as a thinning of the crowd permitted the anxious and blushing sire to reassemble them and reprove their truancy with Adriatic lightnings from his dark glowing eyes.

How pleasing is our commuter's simplicity! A cage of white mice, or a crated goat (such are to be seen now and then on the Jamaica platform) will engage his eye and give him keen amusement. Then there is that game always known (in the smoking car) as "pea-knuckle." The sight of four men playing will afford contemplative and apparently intense satisfaction to all near. They will lean diligently over seat-backs to watch every play of the cards. They will stand in the aisle to follow the game, with apparent comprehension. Then there are distinguished figures that move through the observant commuter's peep-show. There is the tall young man with the beaky nose, which (as Herrick said)

*Is the grace
And proscenium of his face.*

He is one of several light-hearted and carefree gentry who always sit together and are full of superb cheer. Those who travel sometimes with twinges of perplexity or skepticism are healed when they see the magnificent assurance of this creature. Every day we hear him making dates for his cronies to meet him at lunch time, and in the evening we see him towering above the throng at the gate. We like his confident air toward life, though he is still a little too jocular to be a typical commuter.

But the commuter, though simple and anxious to be pleased, is shrewdly alert. Every now and then they shuffle the trains at Jamaica just to keep him guessing and sharpen his faculty of judging whether this train goes to Brooklyn or Penn Station. His decisions have to be made rapidly. We are speaking now of Long Island commuters, whom we know best; but commuters are the same wherever you find them. The Jersey commuter has had his own celebrant in Joyce Kilmer, and we hope that he knows Joyce's pleasant essay on the subject which was published in that little book, "The Circus and Other Essays." But we gain-say the right of Staten Islanders to be

classed as commuters. These are a proud and active sort who are really seafarers, not commuters. Fogs and ice floes make them blench a little; but the less romantic troubles of broken brake-shoes leave them unscotched.

Of Long Island commuters there are two classes: those who travel to Penn Station, those who travel to Brooklyn. Let it not be denied, there is a certain air of aristocracy about the Penn Station clique that we cannot waive. Their tastes are more delicate. The train-boy from Penn Station cries aloud "Choice, delicious apples," which seems to us almost an affectation compared to the hoarse yell of our Brooklyn news-agents imploring "Have a comic cartoon book, 'Mutt and Jeff,' 'Bringing Up Father,' chocolut-covered cherries!" The club cars all go to Penn Station: there would be a general apoplexy in the lowly terminal at Atlantic Avenue if one of those vehicles were seen there. People are often seen (on the Penn Station branch) who look exactly like the advertisements in *Vanity Fair*. Yet we, for our humility, have treasures of our own, such as the brightly lighted little shops along Atlantic Avenue and a station with the poetic name of Autumn Avenue. The Brooklyn commuter points with pride to his monthly ticket, which is distinguished from that of the Penn Station nobility by a red badge of courage--a bright red stripe. On the Penn Station branch they often punch the tickets with little diamond-shaped holes; but on our line the punch is in the form of a heart.

When the humble commuter who is accustomed to travelling via Brooklyn is diverted from his accustomed orbit, and goes by way of the Pennsylvania Station, what surprising excitements are his. The enormousness of the crowd at Penn Station around 5 P.M. causes him to realize that what he had thought, in his innocent Brooklyn fashion, was a considerable mob, was nothing more than a trifling scuffle. But he notes with pleasure the Penn Station habit of letting people through the gate before the train comes in, so that one may stand in comparative comfort and coolness downstairs on the train platform. Here a vision of luxury greets his eyes that could not possibly be imagined at the Brooklyn terminal--the Lehigh Valley dining car that stands on a neighbouring track, the pink candles lit on the tables, the shining water carafes, the white-coated stewards at attention. At the car's kitchen window lolls a young coloured boy in a chef's hat, surveying the files of proletarian commuters with a glorious calmness of scorn and superiority. His mood of sanguine assurance and self-esteem is so complete, so unruffled, and so composed that we cannot help loving him. Lucky youth, devoid of cares, responsibilities, and chagrins! Does he not belong to the conquering class that has us all under its thumb? What

does it matter that he (probably) knows less about cooking than you or I? He gazes with glorious cheer upon the wretched middle class, and as our train rolls away we see him still gazing across the darkling cellars of the station with that untroubled gleam of condescension, his eyes seeming (as we look back at them) as large and white and unspeculative as billiard balls.

In the eye of one commuter, the 12:50 SATURDAY ONLY is the most exciting train of all. What a gay, heavily-bundled, and loquacious crowd it is that gathers by the gate at the Atlantic Avenue terminal. There is a holiday spirit among the throng, which pants a little after the battle down and up those steps leading from the subway. (What a fine sight, incidentally, is the stag-like stout man who always leaps from the train first and speeds scuddingly along the platform, to reach the stairs before any one else.) Here is the man who always carries a blue cardboard box full of chicks. Their plaintive chirpings sound shrill and disconsolate. There is such a piercing sorrow and perplexity in their persistent query that one knows they have the true souls of minor poets. Here are two cheerful stenographers off to Rockaway for the week-end. They are rather sarcastic about another young woman of their party who always insists on sleeping under sixteen blankets when at the shore.

But the high point of the trip comes when one changes at Jamaica, there boarding the 1:15 for Salamis. This is the train that on Saturdays takes back the two famous club cars, known to all travellers on the Oyster Bay route. Behind partly drawn blinds the luncheon tables are spread; one gets narrow glimpses of the great ones of the Island at their tiffin. This is a militant moment for the white-jacketed steward of the club car. On Saturdays there are always some strangers, unaccustomed to the ways of this train, who regard the two wagons of luxury as a personal affront. When they find all the seats in the other cars filled they sternly desire to storm the door of the club car, where the proud steward stands on guard. "What's the matter with this car?" they say. "Nothing's the matter with it," he replies. Other more humble commuters stand in the vestibule, enjoying these little arguments. It is always quite delightful to see the indignation of these gallant creatures, their faces seamed with irritation to think that there should be a holy of holies into which they may not tread.

A proud man, and a high-spirited, is the conductor of the 4:27 on weekdays. This train, after leaving Jamaica, does not stop until Salamis is reached. It attains such magnificent speed that it always gets to Salamis a couple of minutes ahead of time. Then stands the conductor on the platform, watch in hand, receiving the plaudits of

those who get off. The Salamites have to stand patiently beside the train--it is a level crossing--until it moves on. This is the daily glory of this conductor, as he stands, watch in one hand, the other hand on the signal cord, waiting for Time to catch up with him. "_Some_ train," we cry up at him; he tries not to look pleased, but he is a happy man. Then he pulls the cord and glides away.

Among other articulations in the anatomy of commuting, we mention the fact that no good trainman ever speaks of a train _going_ or _stopping_ anywhere. He says, "This train _makes_ Sea Cliff and Glen Cove; it don't make Salamis." To be more purist still, one should refer to the train as "he" (as a kind of extension of the engineer's personality, we suppose). If you want to speak with the tongue of a veteran, you will say, "He makes Sea Cliff and Glen Cove."

The commuter has a chance to observe all manner of types among his brethren. On our line we all know by sight the two fanatical checker players, bent happily over their homemade board all the way to town. At Jamaica they are so absorbed in play that the conductor--this is the conductor who is so nervous about missing a fare and asks everyone three times if his ticket has been punched--has to rout them out to change to the Brooklyn train. "How's the game this morning?" says someone. "Oh, I was just trimming him, but they made us change." However thick the throng, these two always manage to find seats together. They are still hard at it when Atlantic Avenue is reached, furiously playing the last moves as the rest file out. Then there is the humorous news-agent who takes charge of the smoking car between Jamaica and Oyster Bay. There is some mysterious little game that he conducts with his clients. Very solemnly he passes down the aisle distributing rolled-up strips of paper among the card players. By and by it transpires that some one has won a box of candy. Just how this is done we know not. Speaking of card players, observe the gaze of anguish on the outpost. He dashes ahead, grabs two facing seats and sits in one with a face contorted with anxiety for fear that the others will be too late to join him. As soon as a card game is started there are always a half dozen other men who watch it, following every play with painful scrutiny. It seems that watching other people play cards is the most absorbing amusement known to the commuter.

Then there is the man who carries a heavy bag packed with books. A queer creature, this. Day by day he lugs that bag with him yet spends all his time reading the papers and rarely using the books he carries. His pipe always goes out just as he reaches his station; frantically he tries to fill and light it before the train stops. Sometimes he digs deeply into the bag and brings out a large slab of

chocolate, which he eats with an air of being slightly ashamed of himself. The oddities of this person do not amuse us any the less because he happens to be ourself.

So fares the commuter: a figure as international as the teddy bear. He has his own consolations--of a morning when he climbs briskly upward from his dark tunnel and sees the sunlight upon the spread wings of the Telephone and Telegraph Building's statue, and moves again into the stirring pearl and blue of New York's lucid air. And at night, though drooping a little in the heat and dimness of those Oyster Bay smoking cars, he is dumped down and set free. As he climbs the long hill and tunes his thoughts in order, the sky is a froth of stars.

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CHAPTER X

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Babbitt*, by Sinclair Lewis

No apartment-house in Zenith had more resolutely experimented in condensation than the Revelstoke Arms, in which Paul and Zilla Riesling had a flat. By sliding the beds into low closets the bedrooms were converted into living-rooms. The kitchens were cupboards each containing an electric range, a copper sink, a glass refrigerator, and, very intermittently, a Balkan maid. Everything about the Arms was excessively modern, and everything was compressed--except the garages.

The Babbitts were calling on the Rieslings at the Arms. It was a speculative venture to call on the Rieslings; interesting and sometimes disconcerting. Zilla was an active, strident, full-blown, high-bosomed blonde. When she condescended to be good-humored she was nervously amusing. Her comments on people were saltily satiric and penetrative of accepted hypocrisies. "That's so!" you said, and looked sheepish. She danced wildly, and called on the world to be merry, but in the midst of it she would turn indignant. She was always becoming indignant. Life was a plot against her and she exposed it furiously.

She was affable to-night. She merely hinted that Orville Jones wore a toupe, that Mrs. T. Cholmondeley Frink's singing resembled a Ford going into high, and that the Hon. Otis Deeble, mayor of Zenith and candidate for Congress, was a flatulent fool (which was quite true). The Babbitts and Rieslings sat doubtfully on stone-hard brocade chairs in the small living-room of the flat, with its mantel unprovided with a fireplace, and its strip of heavy gilt fabric upon a glaring new player-piano, till

Mrs. Riesling shrieked, "Come on! Let's put some pep in it! Get out your fiddle, Paul, and I'll try to make Georgie dance decently."

The Babbitts were in earnest. They were plotting for the escape to Maine. But when Mrs. Babbitt hinted with plump smilingness, "Does Paul get as tired after the winter's work as Georgie does?" then Zilla remembered an injury; and when Zilla Riesling remembered an injury the world stopped till something had been done about it.

"Does he get tired? No, he doesn't get tired, he just goes crazy, that's all! You think Paul is so reasonable, oh, yes, and he loves to make out he's a little lamb, but he's stubborn as a mule. Oh, if you had to live with him--! You'd find out how sweet he is! He just pretends to be meek so he can have his own way. And me, I get the credit for being a terrible old crank, but if I didn't blow up once in a while and get something started, we'd die of dry-rot. He never wants to go any place and--Why, last evening, just because the car was out of order--and that was his fault, too, because he ought to have taken it to the service-station and had the battery looked at--and he didn't want to go down to the movies on the trolley. But we went, and then there was one of those impudent conductors, and Paul wouldn't do a thing.

"I was standing on the platform waiting for the people to let me into the car, and this beast, this conductor, hollered at me, 'Come on, you, move up!' Why, I've never had anybody speak to me that way in all my life! I was so astonished I just turned to him and said--I thought there must be some mistake, and so I said to him, perfectly pleasant, 'Were you speaking to me?' and he went on and bellowed at me, 'Yes, I was! You're keeping the whole car from starting!' he said, and then I saw he was one of these dirty ill-bred hogs that kindness is wasted on, and so I stopped and looked right at him, and I said, 'I--beg--your--pardon, I am not doing anything of the kind,' I said, 'it's the people ahead of me, who won't move up,' I said, 'and furthermore, let me tell you, young man, that you're a low-down, foul-mouthed, impertinent skunk,' I said, 'and you're no gentleman! I certainly intend to report you, and we'll see,' I said, 'whether a lady is to be insulted by any drunken bum that chooses to put on a ragged uniform, and I'd thank you,' I said, 'to keep your filthy abuse to yourself.' And then I waited for Paul to show he was half a man and come to my defense, and he just stood there and pretended he hadn't heard a word, and so I said to him, 'Well,' I said--"

"Oh, cut it, cut it, Zill!" Paul groaned. "We all know I'm a mollycoddle, and you're a tender bud, and let's let it go at that."

"Let it go?" Zilla's face was wrinkled like the Medusa, her voice was a

dagger of corroded brass. She was full of the joy of righteousness and bad temper. She was a crusader and, like every crusader, she exulted in the opportunity to be vicious in the name of virtue. "Let it go? If people knew how many things I've let go--"

"Oh, quit being such a bully."

"Yes, a fine figure you'd cut if I didn't bully you! You'd lie abed till noon and play your idiotic fiddle till midnight! You're born lazy, and you're born shiftless, and you're born cowardly, Paul Riesling--"

"Oh, now, don't say that, Zilla; you don't mean a word of it!" protested Mrs. Babbitt.

"I will say that, and I mean every single last word of it!"

"Oh, now, Zilla, the idea!" Mrs. Babbitt was maternal and fussy. She was no older than Zilla, but she seemed so--at first. She was placid and puffy and mature, where Zilla, at forty-five, was so bleached and tight-corseted that you knew only that she was older than she looked. "The idea of talking to poor Paul like that!"

"Poor Paul is right! We'd both be poor, we'd be in the poorhouse, if I didn't jazz him up!"

"Why, now, Zilla, Georgie and I were just saying how hard Paul's been working all year, and we were thinking it would be lovely if the Boys could run off by themselves. I've been coaxing George to go up to Maine ahead of the rest of us, and get the tired out of his system before we come, and I think it would be lovely if Paul could manage to get away and join him."

At this exposure of his plot to escape, Paul was startled out of impassivity. He rubbed his fingers. His hands twitched.

Zilla bayed, "Yes! You're lucky! You can let George go, and not have to watch him. Fat old Georgie! Never peeps at another woman! Hasn't got the spunk!"

"The hell I haven't!" Babbitt was fervently defending his priceless immorality when Paul interrupted him--and Paul looked dangerous. He rose quickly; he said gently to Zilla:

"I suppose you imply I have a lot of sweethearts."

"Yes, I do!"

"Well, then, my dear, since you ask for it--There hasn't been a time in the last ten years when I haven't found some nice little girl to comfort me, and as long as you continue your amiability I shall probably continue to deceive you. It isn't hard. You're so stupid."

Zilla gibbered; she howled; words could not be distinguished in her slaver of abuse.

Then the bland George F. Babbitt was transformed. If Paul was dangerous, if Zilla was a snake-locked fury, if the neat emotions suitable to the Revelstoke Arms had been slashed into raw hatreds, it was Babbitt who was the most formidable. He leaped up. He seemed very large. He seized Zilla's shoulder. The cautions of the broker were wiped from his face, and his voice was cruel:

"I've had enough of all this damn nonsense! I've known you for twenty-five years, Zil, and I never knew you to miss a chance to take your disappointments out on Paul. You're not wicked. You're worse. You're a fool. And let me tell you that Paul is the finest boy God ever made. Every decent person is sick and tired of your taking advantage of being a woman and springing every mean innuendo you can think of. Who the hell are you that a person like Paul should have to ask your PERMISSION to go with me? You act like you were a combination of Queen Victoria and Cleopatra. You fool, can't you see how people snicker at you, and sneer at you?"

Zilla was sobbing, "I've never--I've never--nobody ever talked to me like this in all my life!"

"No, but that's the way they talk behind your back! Always! They say you're a scolding old woman. Old, by God!"

That cowardly attack broke her. Her eyes were blank. She wept. But Babbitt glared stolidly. He felt that he was the all-powerful official in charge; that Paul and Mrs. Babbitt looked on him with awe; that he alone could handle this case.

Zilla writhed. She begged, "Oh, they don't!"

"They certainly do!"

"I've been a bad woman! I'm terribly sorry! I'll kill myself! I'll do anything. Oh, I'll--What do you want?"

She abased herself completely. Also, she enjoyed it. To the connoisseur

of scenes, nothing is more enjoyable than a thorough, melodramatic, egoistic humility.

"I want you to let Paul beat it off to Maine with me," Babbitt demanded.

"How can I help his going? You've just said I was an idiot and nobody paid any attention to me."

"Oh, you can help it, all right, all right! What you got to do is to cut out hinting that the minute he gets out of your sight, he'll go chasing after some petticoat. Matter fact, that's the way you start the boy off wrong. You ought to have more sense--"

"Oh, I will, honestly, I will, George. I know I was bad. Oh, forgive me, all of you, forgive me--"

She enjoyed it.

So did Babbitt. He condemned magnificently and forgave piously, and as he went parading out with his wife he was grandly explanatory to her:

"Kind of a shame to bully Zilla, but course it was the only way to handle her. Gosh, I certainly did have her crawling!"

She said calmly, "Yes. You were horrid. You were showing off. You were having a lovely time thinking what a great fine person you were!"

"Well, by golly! Can you beat it! Of course I might of expected you to not stand by me! I might of expected you'd stick up for your own sex!"

"Yes. Poor Zilla, she's so unhappy. She takes it out on Paul. She hasn't a single thing to do, in that little flat. And she broods too much. And she used to be so pretty and gay, and she resents losing it. And you were just as nasty and mean as you could be. I'm not a bit proud of you--or of Paul, boasting about his horrid love-affairs!"

He was sulkily silent; he maintained his bad temper at a high level of outraged nobility all the four blocks home. At the door he left her, in self-approving haughtiness, and tramped the lawn.

With a shock it was revealed to him: "Gosh, I wonder if she was right--if she was partly right?" Overwork must have flayed him to abnormal sensitiveness; it was one of the few times in his life when he had queried his eternal excellence; and he perceived the summer night, smelled the wet grass. Then: "I don't care! I've pulled it off. We're going to have our spree. And for Paul, I'd do anything."

They were buying their Maine tackle at Ijams Brothers', the Sporting Goods Mart, with the help of Willis Ijams, fellow member of the Boosters' Club. Babbitt was completely mad. He trumpeted and danced. He muttered to Paul, "Say, this is pretty good, eh? To be buying the stuff, eh? And good old Willis Ijams himself coming down on the floor to wait on us! Say, if those fellows that are getting their kit for the North Lakes knew we were going clear up to Maine, they'd have a fit, eh? . . . Well, come on, Brother Ijams--Willis, I mean. Here's your chance! We're a couple of easy marks! Whee! Let me at it! I'm going to buy out the store!"

He gloated on fly-rods and gorgeous rubber hip-boots, on tents with celluloid windows and folding chairs and ice-boxes. He simple-heartedly wanted to buy all of them. It was the Paul whom he was always vaguely protecting who kept him from his drunken desires.

But even Paul lightened when Willis Ijams, a salesman with poetry and diplomacy, discussed flies. "Now, of course, you boys know," he said, "the great scrap is between dry flies and wet flies. Personally, I'm for dry flies. More sporting."

"That's so. Lots more sporting," fulminated Babbitt, who knew very little about flies either wet or dry.

"Now if you'll take my advice, Georgie, you'll stock up well on these pale evening dims, and silver sedges, and red ants. Oh, boy, there's a fly, that red ant!"

"You bet! That's what it is--a fly!" rejoiced Babbitt.

"Yes, sir, that red ant," said Ijams, "is a real honest-to-God FLY!"

"Oh, I guess ole Mr. Trout won't come a-hustling when I drop one of those red ants on the water!" asserted Babbitt, and his thick wrists made a rapturous motion of casting.

"Yes, and the landlocked salmon will take it, too," said Ijams, who had never seen a landlocked salmon.

"Salmon! Trout! Say, Paul, can you see Uncle George with his khaki pants on haulin' 'em in, some morning 'bout seven? Whee!"

III

They were on the New York express, incredibly bound for Maine, incredibly without their families. They were free, in a man's world, in the smoking-compartment of the Pullman.

Outside the car window was a glaze of darkness stippled with the gold of infrequent mysterious lights. Babbitt was immensely conscious, in the sway and authoritative clatter of the train, of going, of going on. Leaning toward Paul he grunted, "Gosh, pretty nice to be hiking, eh?"

The small room, with its walls of ocher-colored steel, was filled mostly with the sort of men he classified as the Best Fellows You'll Ever Meet--Real Good Mixers. There were four of them on the long seat; a fat man with a shrewd fat face, a knife-edged man in a green velour hat, a very young young man with an imitation amber cigarette-holder, and Babbitt. Facing them, on two movable leather chairs, were Paul and a lanky, old-fashioned man, very cunning, with wrinkles bracketing his mouth. They all read newspapers or trade journals, boot-and-shoe journals, crockery journals, and waited for the joys of conversation. It was the very young man, now making his first journey by Pullman, who began it.

"Say, gee, I had a wild old time in Zenith!" he gloried. "Say, if a fellow knows the ropes there he can have as wild a time as he can in New York!"

"Yuh, I bet you simply raised the old Ned. I figured you were a bad man when I saw you get on the train!" chuckled the fat one.

The others delightedly laid down their papers.

"Well, that's all right now! I guess I seen some things in the Arbor you never seen!" complained the boy.

"Oh, I'll bet you did! I bet you lapped up the malted milk like a reg'lar little devil!"

Then, the boy having served as introduction, they ignored him and charged into real talk. Only Paul, sitting by himself, reading at a serial story in a newspaper, failed to join them and all but Babbitt regarded him as a snob, an eccentric, a person of no spirit.

Which of them said which has never been determined, and does not matter, since they all had the same ideas and expressed them always with the

same ponderous and brassy assurance. If it was not Babbitt who was delivering any given verdict, at least he was beaming on the chancellor who did deliver it.

"At that, though," announced the first "they're selling quite some booze in Zenith. Guess they are everywhere. I don't know how you fellows feel about prohibition, but the way it strikes me is that it's a mighty beneficial thing for the poor zob that hasn't got any will-power but for fellows like us, it's an infringement of personal liberty."

"That's a fact. Congress has got no right to interfere with a fellow's personal liberty," contended the second.

A man came in from the car, but as all the seats were full he stood up while he smoked his cigarette. He was an Outsider; he was not one of the Old Families of the smoking-compartment. They looked upon him bleakly and, after trying to appear at ease by examining his chin in the mirror, he gave it up and went out in silence.

"Just been making a trip through the South. Business conditions not very good down there," said one of the council.

"Is that a fact! Not very good, eh?"

"No, didn't strike me they were up to normal."

"Not up to normal, eh?"

"No, I wouldn't hardly say they were."

The whole council nodded sagely and decided, "Yump, not hardly up to snuff."

"Well, business conditions ain't what they ought to be out West, neither, not by a long shot."

"That's a fact. And I guess the hotel business feels it. That's one good thing, though: these hotels that've been charging five bucks a day--yes, and maybe six--seven!--for a rotten room are going to be darn glad to get four, and maybe give you a little service."

"That's a fact. Say, uh, speaknubout hotels, I hit the St. Francis at San Francisco for the first time, the other day, and, say, it certainly is a first-class place."

"You're right, brother! The St. Francis is a swell place--absolutely

A1."

"That's a fact. I'm right with you. It's a first-class place."

"Yuh, but say, any of you fellows ever stay at the Rippleton, in Chicago? I don't want to knock--I believe in boosting wherever you can--but say, of all the rotten dumps that pass 'emselves off as first-class hotels, that's the worst. I'm going to get those guys, one of these days, and I told 'em so. You know how I am--well, maybe you don't know, but I'm accustomed to first-class accommodations, and I'm perfectly willing to pay a reasonable price. I got into Chicago late the other night, and the Rippleton's near the station--I'd never been there before, but I says to the taxi-driver--I always believe in taking a taxi when you get in late; may cost a little more money, but, gosh, it's worth it when you got to be up early next morning and out selling a lot of crabs--and I said to him, 'Oh, just drive me over to the Rippleton.'

"Well, we got there, and I breezed up to the desk and said to the clerk, 'Well, brother, got a nice room with bath for Cousin Bill?' Saaaay! You'd 'a' thought I'd sold him a second, or asked him to work on Yom Kippur! He hands me the cold-boiled stare and yaps, 'I dunno, friend, I'll see,' and he ducks behind the rigamajig they keep track of the rooms on. Well, I guess he called up the Credit Association and the American Security League to see if I was all right--he certainly took long enough--or maybe he just went to sleep; but finally he comes out and looks at me like it hurts him, and croaks, 'I think I can let you have a room with bath.' 'Well, that's awful nice of you--sorry to trouble you--how much 'll it set me back?' I says, real sweet. 'It'll cost you seven bucks a day, friend,' he says.

"Well, it was late, and anyway, it went down on my expense-account--gosh, if I'd been paying it instead of the firm, I'd 'a' tramped the streets all night before I'd 'a' let any hick tavern stick me seven great big round dollars, believe me! So I lets it go at that. Well, the clerk wakes a nice young bell hop--fine lad--not a day over seventy-nine years old--fought at the Battle of Gettysburg and doesn't know it's over yet--thought I was one of the Confederates, I guess, from the way he looked at me--and Rip van Winkle took me up to something--I found out afterwards they called it a room, but first I thought there'd been some mistake--I thought they were putting me in the Salvation Army collection-box! At seven per each and every diem! Gosh!"

"Yuh, I've heard the Rippleton was pretty cheesy. Now, when I go to Chicago I always stay at the Blackstone or the La Salle--first-class places."

“Say, any of you fellows ever stay at the Birchdale at Terre Haute? How is it?”

“Oh, the Birchdale is a first-class hotel.”

(Twelve minutes of conference on the state of hotels in South Bend, Flint, Dayton, Tulsa, Wichita, Fort Worth, Winona, Erie, Fargo, and Moose Jaw.)

“Speaknubout prices,” the man in the velour hat observed, fingering the elk-tooth on his heavy watch-chain, “I'd like to know where they get this stuff about clothes coming down. Now, you take this suit I got on.”

He pinched his trousers-leg. “Four years ago I paid forty-two fifty for it, and it was real sure-'nough value. Well, here the other day I went into a store back home and asked to see a suit, and the fellow yanks out some hand-me-downs that, honest, I wouldn't put on a hired man. Just out of curiosity I asks him, 'What you charging for that junk?' 'Junk,' he says, 'what d' you mean junk? That's a swell piece of goods, all wool--' Like hell! It was nice vegetable wool, right off the Ole Plantation! 'It's all wool,' he says, 'and we get sixty-seven ninety for it.' 'Oh, you do, do you!' I says. 'Not from me you don't,' I says, and I walks right out on him. You bet! I says to the wife, 'Well,' I said, 'as long as your strength holds out and you can go on putting a few more patches on papa's pants, we'll just pass up buying clothes.'”

“That's right, brother. And just look at collars, frinstance--”

“Hey! Wait!” the fat man protested. “What's the matter with collars? I'm selling collars! D' you realize the cost of labor on collars is still two hundred and seven per cent. above--”

They voted that if their old friend the fat man sold collars, then the price of collars was exactly what it should be; but all other clothing was tragically too expensive. They admired and loved one another now. They went profoundly into the science of business, and indicated that the purpose of manufacturing a plow or a brick was so that it might be sold. To them, the Romantic Hero was no longer the knight, the wandering poet, the cowpuncher, the aviator, nor the brave young district attorney, but the great sales-manager, who had an Analysis of Merchandizing Problems on his glass-topped desk, whose title of nobility was “Go-getter,” and who devoted himself and all his young samurai to the cosmic purpose of Selling--not of selling anything in particular, for or to anybody in particular, but pure Selling.

The shop-talk roused Paul Riesling. Though he was a player of violins and an interestingly unhappy husband, he was also a very able salesman

of tar-roofing. He listened to the fat man's remarks on "the value of house-organs and bulletins as a method of jazzing-up the Boys out on the road;" and he himself offered one or two excellent thoughts on the use of two-cent stamps on circulars. Then he committed an offense against the holy law of the Clan of Good Fellows. He became highbrow.

They were entering a city. On the outskirts they passed a steel-mill which flared in scarlet and orange flame that licked at the cadaverous stacks, at the iron-sheathed walls and sullen converters.

"My Lord, look at that--beautiful!" said Paul.

"You bet it's beautiful, friend. That's the Shelling-Horton Steel Plant, and they tell me old John Shelling made a good three million bones out of munitions during the war!" the man with the velour hat said reverently.

"I didn't mean--I mean it's lovely the way the light pulls that picturesque yard, all littered with junk, right out of the darkness," said Paul.

They stared at him, while Babbitt crowed, "Paul there has certainly got one great little eye for picturesque places and quaint sights and all that stuff. 'D of been an author or something if he hadn't gone into the roofing line."

Paul looked annoyed. (Babbitt sometimes wondered if Paul appreciated his loyal boosting.) The man in the velour hat grunted, "Well, personally, I think Shelling-Horton keep their works awful dirty. Bum routing. But I don't suppose there's any law against calling 'em 'picturesque' if it gets you that way!"

Paul sulkily returned to his newspaper and the conversation logically moved on to trains.

"What time do we get into Pittsburg?" asked Babbitt.

"Pittsburg? I think we get in at--no, that was last year's schedule--wait a minute--let's see--got a time-table right here."

"I wonder if we're on time?"

"Yuh, sure, we must be just about on time."

"No, we aren't--we were seven minutes late, last station."

"Were we? Straight? Why, gosh, I thought we were right on time."

"No, we're about seven minutes late."

"Yuh, that's right; seven minutes late."

The porter entered--a negro in white jacket with brass buttons.

"How late are we, George?" growled the fat man.

"Deed, I don't know, sir. I think we're about on time," said the porter, folding towels and deftly tossing them up on the rack above the washbowls. The council stared at him gloomily and when he was gone they wailed:

"I don't know what's come over these niggers, nowadays. They never give you a civil answer."

"That's a fact. They're getting so they don't have a single bit of respect for you. The old-fashioned coon was a fine old cuss--he knew his place--but these young dinges don't want to be porters or cotton-pickers. Oh, no! They got to be lawyers and professors and Lord knows what all! I tell you, it's becoming a pretty serious problem. We ought to get together and show the black man, yes, and the yellow man, his place. Now, I haven't got one particle of race-prejudice. I'm the first to be glad when a nigger succeeds--so long as he stays where he belongs and doesn't try to usurp the rightful authority and business ability of the white man."

"That's the i.! And another thing we got to do," said the man with the velour hat (whose name was Koplinsky), "is to keep these damn foreigners out of the country. Thank the Lord, we're putting a limit on immigration. These Dagoes and Hunkies have got to learn that this is a white man's country, and they ain't wanted here. When we've assimilated the foreigners we got here now and learned 'em the principles of Americanism and turned 'em into regular folks, why then maybe we'll let in a few more."

"You bet. That's a fact," they observed, and passed on to lighter topics. They rapidly reviewed motor-car prices, tire-mileage, oil-stocks, fishing, and the prospects for the wheat-crop in Dakota.

But the fat man was impatient at this waste of time. He was a veteran traveler and free of illusions. Already he had asserted that he was "an old he-one." He leaned forward, gathered in their attention by his expression of sly humor, and grumbled, "Oh, hell, boys, let's cut out

the formality and get down to the stories!"

They became very lively and intimate.

Paul and the boy vanished. The others slid forward on the long seat, unbuttoned their vests, thrust their feet up on the chairs, pulled the stately brass cuspidors nearer, and ran the green window-shade down on its little trolley, to shut them in from the uncomfortable strangeness of night. After each bark of laughter they cried, "Say, jever hear the one about--" Babbitt was expansive and virile. When the train stopped at an important station, the four men walked up and down the cement platform, under the vast smoky train-shed roof, like a stormy sky, under the elevated footways, beside crates of ducks and sides of beef, in the mystery of an unknown city. They strolled abreast, old friends and well content. At the long-drawn "AIIIII aboarrrrrd"--like a mountain call at dusk--they hastened back into the smoking-compartment, and till two of the morning continued the droll tales, their eyes damp with cigar-smoke and laughter. When they parted they shook hands, and chuckled, "Well, sir, it's been a great session. Sorry to bust it up. Mighty glad to met you."

Babbitt lay awake in the close hot tomb of his Pullman berth, shaking with remembrance of the fat man's limerick about the lady who wished to be wild. He raised the shade; he lay with a puffy arm tucked between his head and the skimpy pillow, looking out on the sliding silhouettes of trees, and village lamps like exclamation-points. He was very happy.

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Positively Laughable

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MARTHA
HEPPLETHWAITE. By Frank Sullivan.
New York: Boni & Liveright. 1927. \$2.

THE STORY OF A WONDER MAN. Being
the Autobiography of Ring Lardner. New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons. 1927. \$1.75.

THE EARLY WORM. By Robert BENCHLEY.
New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1927. \$2.

Reviewed by William Rose BENET
THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE,

MAY 14, 1927

I MUST first mention a painful discrepancy between these avowedly humorous volumes. Mr. Lardner's volume costs only one dollar and seventy-five cents, while the volumes of Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Benchley both cost two dollars,—I mean, apiece. Mr. Lardner is cutting the ground right from under their feet. Then, again, I don't know Mr. Lardner (though I met him once at a wedding—ha! ha!—too funny!) and I do know both Mr. Benchley and Mr. Sullivan. (That is, every time they see me they laugh.) So this review is just going to be a lot of log-rolling, you can be sure of 'that.

Mr. Sullivan's volume has been on my desk now for some time. I had a couple of dozen good hearty smiles out of it. But lately I have been serious. But I have noticed that the volume is getting a little dog-eared. This has been caused by its having been frequently removed and replaced by miscreants who shall be nameless. They get thumb-marks all over it. But it hasn't got dusty.

Mr. Benchley's volume has just come in. Mr. Lardner's volume is minus its jacket. I wish people wouldn't throw the jackets of my books away, that shall be nameless. Mr. Benchley has the best illustrator, Gluyas Williams. Mr. Lardner's illustrator is quite nice too, though,—Margaret Freeman. Both of these illustrators draw recognizable portraits of Mr. Benchley and Mr. Lardner,—the big—! Milt Gross drew Mr. Sullivan's jacket for him, but made no pictures for the interior. 'This makes the book pretty tough reading until you get into the spirit of it. And where he takes up the Hall-Mills case in terms of solar eclipses his argument can hardly be called cogent. In fact he never is cogent. That is what I like about him.

Now these three young men are pretty amusing fellows. In America we have a term for such goings on. We call them humorists. Another generation would have called them plain liars. I should call them fancy. I should call them pretty

darn good at embellished prevarication. Yet it is saddening. You really can't trust them. You trot along beside them, innocently, half-heartedly, your small sticky hand in theirs, gazing up at them with that devoted dog-like expression in your large round eyes,—and then they suddenly begin to tell you things that just aren't so. I know my mother wouldn't like me to tell stories like that.

Take for instance Mr. Lardner. He is playing dead in his book. He has this Miss Sarah E. Spool-dripper write a foreword for him. She is Martha Hepplethwaite's second cousin. I happen to know that Mr. Lardner met she and Miss Hepplethwaite in the company of Mr. Sullivan at Robert Henri's. Her and Mr. Lardner framed this thing between them. He isn't either dead,

Then take what Mr. Lardner says about coach Tad Jones shouting at Heffelfinger, "You didn't clean your nails this morning!" I know to the contrary. It was Mike Murphy and Percy Haughton. Every Yale man knows that. And, as a matter of actual fact, Lardner never played for Yale. He was a ringer for Forest Hills in the big 1905 game between Swarthmore and Syracuse. As for his "football trick uncorked"—huh! It was Tom Shevlin of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who deflated the ball,—and, what is little known today, the manufacturers never refunded the money.

It's like that all the way through. For instance, he says "Helsh was a wealthy barn tearer in Pennsylvania. He went all over the state tearing down barns so the horses could get more air." Now Mr. Lardner has just heard this somewhere, and, his ear not being very exact for the nuances of the American language, has confused the words "terror" and "tearer." Helsh was actually known as "the barn terror." This title was given to him because of his penchant for making faces at such outbuildings. He could make such perfectly horrible faces that the barns always fell apart. But it wasn't on account of the horses. Besides, with the new strides that have been made in barn ventilation (See "Barns

and Barning,” by Barney, 4th Edition. Peebles & Whitt: Altoona), why, the thing is perfectly ridiculous upon the face of it.

Mr. Benchley errs likewise. A very flagrant instance is his remark that “That night Burling Nabgratz disappeared and was never seen again in Wallack.” That simply isn’t true. There is a Gurling Naplatz living today in Wallack. If it isn’t the same Banbatz, at least it is a Purling. And Leon Nabgratz was not an old garbler. Wasn’t either!

These writers are not historically accurate. I think it is high time that some one came out flat-footed and said he didn’t believe them. There is a Humorists’ Dictatorship going on in New York City that I really don’t see any end to. Every time I knock at Mr. Benchley’s room at the Shelton he is dictating, and everybody in Great Neck knows how much Mr. Lardner dictates. Mr. Sullivan, in fact, gives the whole show away, asking Miss Hepplethwaite to “take a letter” right in the beginning of his book.

I suppose they think it’s funny.

Another humorist I know is Marc Connelly. He is rather a nice, kind old man with a beard. But he writes plays. Another humorist I know is Donald Ogden Stewart. He is a nice, kind old man with a goitre. But he writes movies. So all we have left are Mr. Lardner, Mr. Benchley, and Mr. Sullivan. They are all perfectly crazy.

They are all perfectly grand.

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THE MISER CHASTISED, by Doña Maria de Zayas
(_fl._ 1637). _Trans. Roscoe._

The Project Gutenberg eBook of *The humour of Spain.*, by Susette M.Taylor

In this edifying manner did Don Marcos arrive at the age of thirty,

with the reputation of a wealthy man; and with good reason, for he had gathered together, at the expense of every gentlemanly quality, and the starvation of his unfortunate carcass, a good round sum, which he always retained near him, for he dreaded every kind of speculation that might place in the slightest degree of jeopardy his darling treasure.

Now as Don Marcos was known to be neither a gambler nor a libertine, good opportunities of marriage continually presented themselves, of which, however, he did not avail himself always, considering it a speculation, and not unlikely to lead to some unfortunate result. Nevertheless, he wished to appear to advantage in the eyes of the ladies, some of whom, not knowing him, might have no objection to him as a husband. To them he appeared more in the light of a gallant than a miser. Amongst others who would have no objection to him, was a lady who had been married, but was not so well reconciled to her situation as a widow.

She was a lady of superior air and pretensions, although somewhat past the prime of life; but by the help of a little study and skill, no one would have supposed that she had arrived at so discreet an age as she certainly had. She was prettily enough called Donna Isidora, and was reported to be very rich; that she had actual property, at least according to those who knew her well, her manner of living clearly enough proved. Now this eligible match was proposed to Don Marcos; the lady was represented to him in such engaging colours, with such perfect assurance that she possessed more than fourteen or fifteen thousand ducats, that he was led into temptation—the temptation of Mammon. Her deceased husband was represented to have been a gentleman of one of the best families of Andalusia, and Donna Isidora was equally well born, and a native of the famous city of Seville.

These flattering communications so worked on the avarice and pride of our friend Don Marcos, that he almost wished himself already married, that he might be sure of the possession of so enviable a prize. He who first entangled Don Marcos in this notable affair was a cunning rogue of a dealer, who not only dealt in marriages, but in other descriptions of more sure traffic.

He promised therefore an introduction to Don Marcos that very evening, because, as he said, there was danger in delay.

Donna Isidora was profuse in her thanks to the obliging gentleman who had procured her the pleasure of such an acquaintance; and she finally established her triumph over Don Marcos, by inviting him to a costly entertainment, wherein she displayed the utmost luxury and wealth.

At this entertainment Don Marcos was introduced to a young man of a very gallant and prepossessing appearance, whom Donna Isidora honoured with the title of nephew. His name was Augustin, and he, in turn, seemed happy in the chance that gave him so delightful a relationship. The under servant, Ines, waited on them at table, because Marcella, the upper maid, by the order of her mistress, was engaged to entertain them with her guitar, in the management of which she was so perfect, that even the grandees of the court were seldom regaled with better music. Her voice, which she accompanied with the instrument, was so melodious, that it appeared more like that of an angel than a woman. The unaffected manner, too, without the slightest timidity, yet equally free from boldness, in which she sung, lent an additional charm; for without being entreated, she continued to amuse them, feeling confident that her performance would be well received.

Don Marcos felt himself so completely at ease with the well-bred, though generous hospitality of Donna Isidora and her nephew, that without the least scruple he amply indemnified himself for many a hungry day, as the sensible diminution of the luxuries of the table bore abundant, or rather scanty testimony. It may be said without exaggeration, that that evening's entertainment furnished him with as much as six days of his ordinary consumption; and the continual and repeated supplies, forced on him by his elegant and kind hostess, were in themselves sufficient to enable him to dispense with eating for a considerable time to come.

The pleasures of the conversation and of the table finished with the daylight, and four wax candles were placed in beautiful candelabras, by the light of which, and the sounds which Augustin drew from the instrument which Marcella had before touched so well, the two girls commenced a dance, in which they moved with such grace, as to excite the admiration of their superiors. After all this, Marcella, at the request of Don Marcos, again took her guitar, and closed the evening's amusement with an old chivalric romance.

On the conclusion of the song, the gentleman who had introduced Don Marcos gave him a hint that it was time to retire; who, though unwilling to leave such good company, and such good cheer, and at such little cost, took leave of his kind hostess with expressions of consideration and friendship, and took his road homewards, entertaining his friend by the way with expressions of admiration of Donna Isidora, or rather, more properly speaking, of her money. He begged him as soon as possible to have a deed drawn up which would ensure to him so enviable a treasure. His friend replied that he might already consider the marriage concluded, for that his opinion held such weight with Donna Isidora, that he would take an early opportunity of speaking

with her to effect the arrangement, for he fully agreed with him, that delays were dangerous.

With this excellent maxim they separated, the one to recount to Donna Isidora what had passed, and the other to return to the house of his master.

It being very late, all the household had retired to rest. Don Marcos availing himself of the end of a candle, which he generally carried in his pocket for the purpose, withdrew to a small lamp, which lighted an image of the Virgin, at the corner of the street. There he placed it on the point of his sword and lighted it, making, at the same time, a very short but devout prayer that the very reasonable hopes he had framed might not be disappointed. Satisfied with this pious duty, he then retired to rest, waiting, however, impatiently for the day which should crown his expectations.

The next day he was visited by his friend Gamorre, such was the name of the gentleman who had recommended to him this tempting alliance. Don Marcos had risen by times that morning, for love and interest had conspired to banish sleep from his pillow. It was, therefore, with the utmost joy that he welcomed his visitor, who informed him that he had been successful in his mission to Donna Isidora, and that he was the bearer of an invitation to him from that lady to pass the day at her house, when he would have an opportunity of personally pressing his suit, and perhaps concluding the negociation which had so happily commenced.

* * * * *

Before they parted that night everything was arranged for their marriage, which in three days from that time was solemnised with all the splendour becoming people of rank and wealth. Don Marcos on this occasion so far overcame his parsimony as to present his wife with a rich wedding dress of great cost and fashion; calculating very wisely that the expense was but trifling in comparison with what he had to receive.

Behold, then, our friend Don Marcos, lord and master of this sumptuous dwelling, and its amiable inmates; and when the day of the auspicious union arrived, it found him in a state of the greatest possible contentment and happiness.

"Surely this is the happiest day of my life," he said to himself. The future domestic arrangements were all carefully discussed by the calculating mind of the bridegroom; and he already had disposed of his

anticipated savings in a speculation; for he had begun even to think of speculating as to the greatest saving and profit.

Before retiring to rest, however, these flattering visions were a little disturbed by the sudden illness of Augustin. Whether it proceeded from mortification at his aunt's wedding, which threatened to curtail him of some of his fair proportions—his accustomed pleasures, or from some natural cause, it is impossible to say; but the house was suddenly thrown into a state of the greatest confusion; servants running about for remedies, and Donna Isidora in a state of the most violent agitation! However, the invalid became composed with the efforts which were made in his behalf; and Donna Isidora ventured to leave him and retire to rest, while the bridegroom went his round, taking care to see that the doors and windows were all fast, possessing himself of the keys for their better security.

This last act of caution seemed to be looked on with great distrust by the servants, who immediately attributed to jealousy that which was the result only of care and prudence; for Don Marcos had that morning removed to the house, with his own valuable person, and all his worldly possessions, including his six thousand ducats, which had not for a long time seen the light of day, and which he intended should still be consigned to solitary confinement, as far as locks and keys would ensure it.

Having arranged everything to his satisfaction, he retired to his bridal-chamber, leaving the servants to bewail their unhappy fortune, in having got a master whose habits threatened to curtail them of little liberties which the kindness of their mistress had so long indulged. Marcella spoke of her dissatisfaction at once; saying that rather than live like a nun, she should seek her fortune elsewhere, but Ines fancying that she heard a noise in the chamber of Don Augustin, and feeling he might require something in his illness, stepped lightly to his room to inquire in what she might assist him.

On the ensuing morning Ines was about the house earlier than usual, and to her surprise found the chamber of Marcella empty, and no appearance of her having slept there that night. Astonished at so strange a circumstance, she left the room to seek her, and was still more surprised on finding the outer door unlocked, which her master had so carefully fastened the night before, and which now, as if for the purpose of disturbing Don Marcos's ideas of security, had been left wide open.

On seeing this, Ines became terribly alarmed, and flew to the chamber of her mistress, raising an outcry that the house had been broken into.

The bridegroom, half stupified with terror, leaped from the couch, calling for his wife to do the same; at the same time drawing aside all the curtains, and throwing open all the windows, in order that there might be no deficiency of light to see whether anything were missing. The first thing he beheld was what he supposed to be his wife, but so altered, that he could scarce believe her to be the same; instead of six-and-thirty years of age, which she professed to be, this sudden and unwelcome visitation of morning light added at least twenty years to her appearance; small locks of grey hair peeped from beneath her nightcap, which had been carefully concealed by the art of the hair-dresser, but the false hair had in the carelessness of sleep been unluckily transferred to the ground.

The suddenness of this morning's alarm had produced another no less unfortunate mischance; her teeth, which Don Marcos had so complimented for their regularity and whiteness, were now, alas! not to be seen, and the lady at least verified the old proverb of not casting pearls before swine. We will not attempt to describe the consternation of the poor hidalgo, or waste words which the imagination can so much better supply. We will only say that Donna Isidora was confounded. It was intolerable that her imperfections should be made thus manifest at so unseasonable an hour, and snatching up her strayed locks, she attempted to replace them, but with such little success, owing to her extreme hurry, that had not Don Marcos been overwhelmed with consternation, he would assuredly hardly have refrained from laughter. She then sought to lay hands on the dress she had worn the previous day; but, alas! nothing of the rich paraphernalia in which she had been attired by the gallantry of her husband—not one of the jewels and trinkets in which she had dazzled the spectators' eyes—remained.

Don Marcos, on his part, was struck dumb with horror, on finding that his own wedding suit was missing, and likewise a valuable gold chain which he had worn at the ceremony, and which he had drawn from his treasure for the purpose. No pen can describe the agony of Don Marcos upon this fatal discovery; he could not even console himself with the youthful graces of his wife, for turning towards her he saw nothing but age and ugliness, and turning his eyes again from her, he found his expensive clothes all vanished, and his chain gone.

Almost out of his wits, he ran out into the saloon, and throughout the apartments, attired only in his shirt, wringing his hands, and betraying every sign of a miser's lamentation and despair. While in this mood, Donna Isidora escaped to her dressing-room, without giving herself the trouble of inquiring into the minor catastrophe, and busied herself in repairing the personal injuries which the untoward event had produced. Don Augustin had by this time risen, and Ines recounted to

him the adventures of the morning, and they both laughed heartily at the consternation of poor Don Marcos, the ridiculous accident of Donna Isidora, and the roguishness of Marcella.

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WITH MR. PEASLEY IN DARKEST LONDON

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *In Pastures New*, by George Ade

We did not expect to have Mr. Peasley with us in London. He planned to hurry on to Paris, but he has been waiting here for his trunk to catch up with him. The story of the trunk will come later.

As we steamed into Plymouth Harbour on a damp and overcast Sabbath morning, Mr. Peasley stood on the topmost deck and gave encouraging information to a man from central Illinois who was on his first trip abroad. Mr. Peasley had been over for six weeks in 1895, and that gave him license to do the "old traveller" specialty.

In beginning a story he would say, "I remember once I was crossing on the _Umbria_," or possibly, "That reminds me of a funny thing I once saw in Munich." He did not practise to deceive, and yet he gave strangers the impression that he had crossed on the _Umbria_ possibly twelve or fourteen times and had spent years in Munich.

The Illinois man looked up to Mr. Peasley as a modern Marco Polo, and Mr. Peasley proceeded to unbend to him.

"A few years ago Americans were very unpopular in England," said Mr. Peasley. "Every one of them was supposed to have either a dynamite bomb or a bunch of mining stock in his pocket. All that is changed now--all changed. As we come up to the dock in Plymouth you will notice just beyond the station a large triumphal arch of evergreen bearing the words, 'Welcome, Americans!' Possibly the band will not be out this morning, because it is Sunday and the weather is threatening, but the Reception Committee will be on hand. If we can take time before starting for London no doubt a committee from the Commercial Club will haul us around in open carriages to visit the public buildings and breweries and other points of interest. And you'll find that your money is counterfeit out here. No use talkin', we're all one people--just like brothers. Wait till you get to London. You'll think you're right back among your friends in Decatur."

It was too early in the morning for the Reception Committee, but there was a policeman--one solitary, water-logged, sad-eyed

policeman--waiting grewsomely on the dock as the tender came alongside. He stood by the gangplank and scrutinised us carefully as we filed ashore. The Illinois man looked about for the triumphal arch, but could not find it. Mr. Peasley explained that they had taken it in on account of the rain.

While the passengers were kept herded into a rather gloomy waiting room, the trunks and larger baggage were brought ashore and sorted out according to the alphabetical labels in an adjoining room to await the customs examination. When the doors opened there was a rush somewhat like the opening of an Oklahoma reservation. In ten minutes the trunks had been passed and were being trundled out to the special train. Above the babel of voices and the rattle of wheels arose the sounds of lamentation and modified cuss words. Mr. Peasley could not find his trunk. It was not with the baggage marked "P." It was not in the boneyard, or the discard, or whatever they call the heap of unmarked stuff piled up at one end of the room. It was not anywhere.

The other passengers, intent upon their private troubles, pawed over their possessions and handed out shillings right and left and followed the line of trucks out to the "luggage vans," and Mr. Peasley was left alone, still demanding his trunk. The station agent and many porters ran hither and thither, looking into all sorts of impossible places, while the locomotive bell rang warningly, and the guard begged Mr. Peasley to get aboard if he wished to go to London. Mr. Peasley took off his hat and leaned his head back and howled for his trunk. The train started and Mr. Peasley, after momentary indecision, made a running leap into our midst. There were six of us in a small padded cell, and five of the six listened for the next fifteen minutes to a most picturesque and impassioned harangue on the subject of the general inefficiency of German steamships and English railways.

[Illustration: _And howled for his trunk_]

"Evidently the trunk was not sent ashore," someone suggested to Mr. Peasley. "If the trunk did not come ashore you could not reasonably expect the station officials to find it and put it aboard the train."

"But why didn't it come ashore?" demanded Mr. Peasley. "Everyone on the boat knew that I was going to get off at Plymouth. It was talked about all the way over. Other people got their trunks, didn't they? Have you heard of any German being shy a trunk? Has anybody else lost anything? No; they went over the passenger list and said, 'If we must hold out a trunk on anyone, let's hold it out on Peasley--old good thing Peasley.'"

[Illustration: _Let's hold it out on Peasley_]

"Are you sure it was put on board at Hoboken?" he was asked.

"Sure thing. I checked it myself, or, rather, I got a fellow that couldn't speak any English to check it for me. Then I saw it lowered into the cellar, or the subway, or whatever they call it."

"Did you get a receipt for it?"

"You bet I did, and right here she is."

He brought out a congested card case and fumbled over a lot of papers, and finally unfolded a receipt about the size of a one-sheet poster. On top was a number and beneath it said in red letters at least two inches tall, "This baggage has been checked to Hamburg."

We called Mr. Peasley's attention to the reading matter, but he said it was a mistake, because he had been intending all the time to get off at Plymouth.

"Nevertheless, your trunk has gone to Hamburg."

"Where is Hamburg?"

"In Germany. The Teuton who checked your baggage could not by any effort of the imagination conceive the possibility of a person starting for anywhere except Hamburg. In two days your trunk will be lying on a dock in Germany."

"Well, there's one consolation," observed Mr. Peasley; "the clothes in that trunk won't fit any German."

When he arrived in London he began wiring for his trunk in several languages. After two days came a message couched in Volapuk or some other hybrid combination, which led him to believe that his property had been started for London.

Mr. Peasley spent a week in the world's metropolis with no clothes except a knockabout travelling outfit and what he called his "Tuxedo," although, over here they say "dinner jacket." In Chicago or Omaha Mr. Peasley could have got along for a week without any embarrassment to himself or others. Even in New York the "Tuxedo" outfit would have carried him through, for it is regarded as a passable apology for evening dress, provided the wearer wishes to advertise himself as a lonesome "stag." But in London there is no compromise. In every hotel

lobby or dining-room, every restaurant, theatre or music hall, after the coagulated fog of the daytime settles into the opaque gloom of night, there is but one style of dress for any mortal who does not wish to publicly pose as a barbarian. The man who affects a "Tuxedo" might as well wear a sweater. In fact it would be better for him if he did wear a sweater, for then people would understand that he was making no effort to dress; but when he puts on a bobtail he conveys the impression that he is trying to be correct and doesn't understand the rules.

An Englishman begins to blossom about half-past seven p.m. The men seen in the streets during the day seem a pretty dingy lot compared with a well-dressed stream along Fifth Avenue. Many of the tall hats bear a faithful resemblance to fur caps. The trousers bag and the coat collars are bunched in the rear and all the shoes seem about two sizes too large. Occasionally you see a man on his way to a train and he wears a shapeless bag of a garment made of some loosely woven material that looks like gunnysack, with a cap that resembles nothing so much as a welsh rabbit that has "spread." To complete the picture, he carries a horse blanket. He thinks it is a rug, but it isn't. It is a horse blanket.

If the Englishman dressed for travel is the most sloppy of all civilised beings, so the Englishman in his night regalia is the most correct and irreproachable of mortals. He can wear evening clothes without being conscious of the fact that he is "dressed up." The trouble with the ordinary American who owns an open-faced suit is that he wears it only about once a month. For two days before assuming the splendour of full dress he broods over the approaching ordeal. As the fateful night draws near he counts up his studs and investigates the "white vest" situation. In the deep solitude of his room he mournfully climbs into the camphor-laden garments, and when he is ready to venture forth, a tall collar choking him above, the glassy shoes pinching him below, he is just as much at ease as he would be in a full suit of armour, with casque and visor.

[Illustration: _"Dressed down" and "Dressed up"_]

However, all this is off the subject. Here was Mr. Peasley in London, desirous of "cutting a wide gash," as he very prettily termed it, plenty of good money from Iowa burning in his pocket, and he could not get out and "associate" because of a mere deficiency in clothing.

At the first-class theatres his "bowler" hat condemned him and he was sent into the gallery. When he walked into a restaurant the head waiter would give him one quick and searching glance and then put him

off in some corner, behind a palm. Even in the music halls the surrounding "Johnnies" regarded him with wonder as another specimen of the eccentric Yankee.

[Illustration: _His bowler hat condemned him_]

We suggested to Mr. Peasley that he wear a placard reading "I have some clothes, but my trunk is in Hamburg." He said that as soon as his swell duds arrived he was going to put them on and revisit all of the places at which he had been humiliated and turned down, just to let the flunkeys know that they had been mistaken.

Mr. Peasley was greatly rejoiced to learn one day that he could attend a football game without wearing a special uniform. So he went out to see a non-brutal game played according to the Association rules. The gentle pastime known as football in America is a modification and overdevelopment of the Rugby game as played in Great Britain. The Association, or "Seeker" game, which is now being introduced in the United States as a counter-irritant for the old-fashioned form of manslaughter, is by far the more popular in England. The Rugby Association is waning in popularity, not because of any outcry against the character of the play or any talk of "brutality," but because the British public has a more abiding fondness for the Association game.

In America we think we are football crazy because we have a few big college games during October and November of each year. In Great Britain the football habit is something that abides, the same as the tea habit.

We are hysterical for about a month and then we forget the game unless we belong to the minority that is trying to debrutalise it and reduce the death rate.

Here it was, February in London, and on the first Saturday after our arrival forty-five Association games and thirty-eight Rugby games were reported in the London papers. At sixteen of the principal Association games the total attendance was over two hundred and fifty thousand and the actual receipts at these same games amounted to about \$45,000. There were two games at each of which the attendance was over thirty thousand, with the receipts exceeding \$5,000. A very conservative estimate of the total attendance at the games played on this Saturday would be five hundred thousand. In other words, on one Saturday afternoon in February the attendance at football games was equal to the total attendance at all of the big college games during an entire season in the United States. No wonder that the English newspapers are beginning to ask editorially "Is football a curse?" There is no

clamour regarding the roughness of the game, but it is said to cost too much money and to take up too much time for the benefits derived.

The game to which Mr. Peasley conducted us was played in rather inclement weather--that is, inclement London weather--which means that it was the most terrible day that the imagination can picture--a dark, chilly, drippy day, with frequent downpours. It has been said that one cannot obtain icewater in London. This is a mistake. We obtained it by the hogshead.

In spite of the fact that the weather was bad beyond description, seventeen thousand spectators attended the game and saw it through to a watery finish.

Mr. Peasley looked on and was much disappointed. He said they used too many players and the number of fatalities was not at all in keeping with the advertised importance of the game. It was a huge crowd, but the prevailing spirit of solemnity worried Mr. Peasley. He spoke to a native standing alongside of him and asked:--"What's the matter with you folks over here? Don't you know how to back up a team? Where are all of your flags and ribbons, your tally-hos and tin horns? Is this a football game or a funeral?"

"Why should one wear ribbons at a football game?" asked the Englishman.

"Might as well put a little ginger into the exercises," suggested Mr. Peasley. "Do you sing during the game?"

"Heavens, no. Sing? Why should one sing during a football game? In what manner is vocal music related to an outdoor pastime of this character?"

"You ought to go to a game in Iowa City. We sing till we're black in the face--all about 'Eat 'em up, boys,' 'Kill 'em in their tracks,' and 'Buck through the line.' What's the use of coming to a game if you stand around all afternoon and don't take part? Have you got any yells?"

"What are those?"

"Can you beat that?" asked Mr. Peasley, turning to us. "A football game without any yells!"

The game started. By straining our eyes we could make out through the deep gloom some thirty energetic young men, very lightly clad, splashing about in all directions, and kicking in all sorts of aimless

directions. Mr. Peasley said it was a mighty poor excuse for football. No one was knocked out; there was no bucking the line; there didn't even seem to be a doctor in evidence. We could not follow the fine points of the contest. Evidently some good plays were being made, for occasionally a low, growling sound--a concerted murmur--would arise from the multitude banked along the side lines.

"What is the meaning of that sound they are making?" asked Mr. Peasley, turning to the native standing alongside of him.

"They are cheering," was the reply.

"They are what?"

"Cheering."

"Great Scott! Do you call that cheering? At home, when we want to encourage the boys we get up on our hind legs and make a noise that you can hear in the next township. We put cracks in the azure dome. Cheering! Why, a game of croquet in the court house yard is eight times as thrilling as this thing. Look at those fellows juggling the ball with their feet. Why doesn't somebody pick it up and butt through that crowd and start a little rough work?"

The native gave Mr. Peasley one hopeless look and moved away.

We could not blame our companion for being disappointed over the cheering. An English cheer is not the ear-splitting demoniacal shriek, such as an American patriot lets out when he hears from another batch of precincts.

The English cheer is simply a loud grunt, or a sort of guttural "Hey! hey!" or "Hurray!"

When an English crowd cheers the sound is similar to that made by a Roman mob in the wings of a theatre.

After having once heard the "cheering" one can understand the meaning of a passage in the Parliamentary report, reading about as follows: "The gentleman hoped the house would not act with haste. (Cheers). He still had confidence in the committee (cheers), but would advise a careful consideration (cheers), etc."

It might be supposed from such a report that Parliament was one continuous "rough house," but we looked in one day and it is more like a cross between a Presbyterian synod and bee-keepers' convention.

About four o'clock we saw a large section of the football crowd moving over toward a booth at one end of the grounds. Mr. Peasley hurried after them, thinking that possibly someone had started a fight on the side and that his love of excitement might be gratified after all. Presently he returned in a state of deep disgust.

"Do you know why all those folks are flockin' over there?" he asked. "Goin' after their tea. Tea! Turnin' their backs on a football game to go and get a cup of tea! Why, that tea thing over there is worse than the liquor habit. Do you know, when the final judgment day comes and Gabriel blows his horn and all of humanity is bunched up, waitin' for the sheep to be cut out from the goats and put into a separate corral, some Englishman will look at his watch and discover that it's five o'clock and then the whole British nation will turn its back on the proceedings and go off looking for tea."

After we had stood in the rain for about an hour someone told Mr. Peasley that one team or the other had won by three goals to nothing, and we followed the moist throng out through the big gates.

"Come with me," said Mr. Peasley, "and I will take you to the only dry place in London."

So we descended to the "tuppenny tube."

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BEAUTY IN 1920

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *On the Margin*, by Aldous Huxley

To those who know how to read the signs of the times it will have become apparent, in the course of these last days and weeks, that the Silly Season is close upon us. Already—and this in July with the menace of three or four new wars grumbling on the thunderous horizon—already a monster of the deep has appeared at a popular seaside resort. Already Mr. Louis McQuilland has launched in the *Daily Express* a fierce onslaught on the younger poets of the Asylum. Already the picture-papers are more than half filled with photographs of bathing nymphs—photographs that make one understand the ease with which St. Anthony rebuffed his temptations. The newspapermen, ramping up and down like wolves, seek their prey wherever they may find it; and it was with a unanimous howl of delight that the whole Press went pelting after the hare started by Mrs. Asquith in a recent instalment of her autobiography. Feebly and

belatedly, let me follow the pack.

Mrs. Asquith's denial of beauty to the daughters of the twentieth century has proved a god-sent giant gooseberry. It has necessitated the calling in of a whole host of skin-food specialists, portrait-painters and photographers to deny this far from soft impeachment. A great deal of space has been agreeably and inexpensively filled. Every one is satisfied, public, editors, skin-food specialists and all. But by far the most interesting contribution to the debate was a pictorial one, which appeared, if I remember rightly, in the Daily News. Side by side, on the same page, we were shown the photographs of three beauties of the eighteen-eighties and three of the nineteen-twenties. The comparison was most instructive. For a great gulf separates the two types of beauty represented by these two sets of photographs.

I remember in If, one of those charming conspiracies of E. V. Lucas and George Morrow, a series of parodied fashion-plates entitled "If Faces get any Flatter. Last year's standard, this year's Evening Standard." The faces of our living specimens of beauty have grown flatter with those of their fashion-plate sisters. Compare the types of 1880 and 1920. The first is steep-faced, almost Roman in profile; in the contemporary beauties the face has broadened and shortened, the profile is less noble, less imposing, more appealingly, more alluringly pretty. Forty years ago it was the aristocratic type that was appreciated; to-day the popular taste has shifted from the countess to the soubrette. Photography confirms the fact that the ladies of the 'eighties looked like Du Maurier drawings. But among the present young generation one looks in vain for the type; the Du Maurier damsel is as extinct as the mesozoic reptile; the Fish girl and other kindred flat-faced species have taken her place.

Between the 'thirties and 'fifties another type, the egg-faced girl, reigned supreme in the affections of the world. From the early portraits of Queen Victoria to the fashion-plates in the Ladies' Keepsake this invariable type prevails—the egg-shaped face, the sleek hair, the swan-like neck, the round, champagne-bottle shoulders. Compared with the decorous impassivity of the oviform girl our flat-faced fashion-plates are terribly abandoned and provocative. And because one expects so much in the way of respectability from these egg-faces of an earlier age, one is apt to be shocked when one sees them conducting themselves in ways that seem unbecoming. One thinks of that enchanting picture of Etty's, "Youth on the Prow and Pleasure at the Helm." The naiads are of the purest egg-faced type. Their hair is sleek, their shoulders slope and their faces are as impassive as blanks. And yet they have no clothes on. It is almost indecent; one imagined that the egg-faced type came into the world complete with flowing draperies.

It is not only the face of beauty that alters with the changes of popular taste. The champagne-bottle shoulders of the oviform girl have vanished from the modern fashion-plate and from modern life. The contemporary hand, with its two middle fingers held together and the forefinger and little finger splayed apart, is another recent product. Above all, the feet have changed. In the days of the egg-faces no fashion-plate had more than one foot. This rule will, I think, be found invariable. That solitary foot projects, generally in a strangely haphazard way as though it had nothing to do with a leg, from under the edge of the skirt. And what a foot! It has no relation to those provocative feet in Suckling's ballad:

*Her feet beneath her petticoat
Like little mice stole in and out.*

It is an austere foot. It is a small, black, oblong object like a tea-leaf. No living human being has ever seen a foot like it, for it is utterly unlike the feet of nineteen-twenty. To-day the fashion-plate is always a biped. The tea-leaf has been replaced by two feet of rich baroque design, curved and florid, with insteps like the necks of Arab horses. Faces may have changed shape, but feet have altered far more radically. On the text, "the feet of the young women," it would be possible to write a profound philosophical sermon.

And while I am on the subject of feet I would like to mention another curious phenomenon of the same kind, but affecting, this time, the standards of male beauty. Examine the pictorial art of the eighteenth century, and you will find that the shape of the male leg is not what it was. In those days the calf of the leg was not a muscle that bulged to its greatest dimensions a little below the back of the knee, to subside, _decrescendo_, towards the ankle. No, in the eighteenth century the calf was an even crescent, with its greatest projection opposite the middle of the shin; the ankle, as we know it, hardly existed. This curious calf is forced upon one's attention by almost every minor picture-maker of the eighteenth century, and even by some of the great masters, as, for instance, Blake. How it came into existence I do not know. Presumably the crescent calf was considered, in the art schools, to approach more nearly to the Platonic Idea of the human leg than did the poor distorted Appearance of real life. Personally, I prefer my calves with the bulge at the top and a proper ankle at the bottom. But then I don't hold much with the _beau idéal_.

The process by which one type of beauty becomes popular, imposes its tyranny for a period and then is displaced by a dissimilar type is a mysterious one. It may be that patient historical scholars will end by

discovering some law to explain the transformation of the Du Maurier type into the flat-face type, the tea-leaf foot into the baroque foot, the crescent calf into the normal calf. As far as one can see at present, these changes seem to be the result of mere hazard and arbitrary choice. But a time will doubtless come when it will be found that these changes of taste are as ineluctably predetermined as any chemical change. Given the South African War, the accession of Edward VII. and the Liberal triumph of 1906, it was, no doubt, as inevitable that Du Maurier should have given place to Fish as that zinc subjected to sulphuric acid should break up into $\text{ZnSO}_4 + \text{H}_2$. But we leave it to others to formulate the precise workings of the law.

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